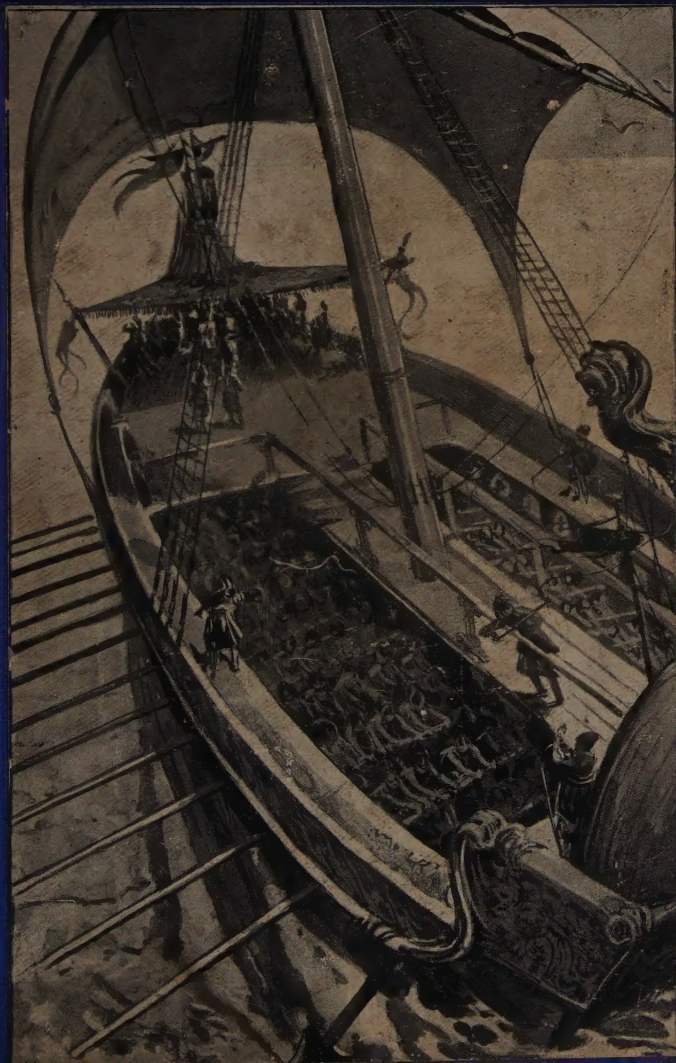


THE SLAVE IN HISTORY



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GRANVILLE SHARP EXHIBITS SYMPATHY FOR THE NEGRO.

[see p. 130.]

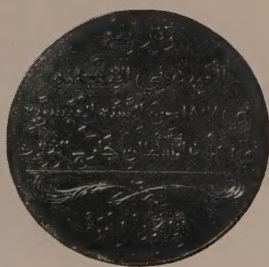
THE SLAVE IN HISTORY

His Sorrows and His Emancipation

By

WILLIAM STEVENS

Sometime Editor of 'The Leisure Hour' and 'The Sunday at Home'



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THE OBJECT of these pages is to bring into one view scattered facts, some of which may be familiar and some forgotten, and so to trace one line of progress in the history of freedom. They cannot claim to be more in the main than a study from accepted authorities ; yet an endeavour has been made to show events in their relation and proportion, in a succession not commonly noted, and some things new have found a place. The transformation described is one of the greatest in the life of nations, and its course could only be shown by going back to the beginnings. The narrative may seem in parts a thrice-told tale, but it is probably known as a whole to not more than a few of this generation ; for no full attempt has yet been made to treat the subject as a unity. The new century takes up its work with larger and more generous sympathies than did the last ; to look back may remind us of hidden dangers, and show where have been found the springs of beneficent change.

W. S.

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CHAPTER I

THE SLAVES OF WAR

WHAT the serpent was to Laocoon, slavery with its entwining folds and its slow torture has been to the world.

The nineteenth century saw many changes, but none of greater social effect than the movement which broke the power of slavery. A usage of primitive times, it had grown with the rise and fall of empires, and ruled as the sum of all tyrannies, the embodiment of all cruelties,—pleading as its justification from age to age, even after the emancipation of Europe, necessity, convenience, tradition,—till at last the spirit of free men rose against it. The struggle which followed was prolonged; it had its prophets and its martyrs; the inward light of conscience led the way with new illuminating power; and human sympathies that had been well-nigh strangled awoke, put on their strength, and did not slumber till they had won for the slave a place in the brotherhood of men. The final adjustment is yet to come.

Go back as far as we may towards the boundaries of history, we shall find the slave awaiting us. We

may meet him in Babylon, possibly with his master's name branded upon him; we see him in Egypt, 'making bricks without straw.' The clay tablets of Assyria in the British Museum show that, after an Arabian campaign, a man or a camel alike was sold for half a shekel of silver. The code of King Khammurabi, brought to light at Susa last year, inscribed on a monolith and ascribed to a time two thousand years before Christ,—the oldest record of laws,—mentions those whose occupation was the branding of slaves. The slave's fate is mixed with the history of every land: it is part of the mystery of man's estate.

Two facts of experience have combined against him—the political necessities of man at war, and the industrial needs of man at peace, which latter have proved the more potent oppressor. The natural instincts which have resolved so much of life into a struggle for power, seem to have had more to do with the origin of slavery than the requirements of ordered service, while the ever-recurring relation of dependence and the impulse of the strong to direct the weak have favoured its milder forms.

In the early ages of war the captives were made slaves—the vanquished of the battlefield, the women and children of the surrendered city—many nationalities and all ranks thus being drawn into servitude, so that a slave might be of higher birth than his master. It was the alternative of massacre, if ransom was not practicable, for the holding or dispersal of the conquered was the security of victory. The cruelties to which



'NOT ANGLES, BUT ANGELS,' HE SAID.

captives were sometimes subjected in the infliction of death exceed imagination in horror. The lot of a slave was merciful in comparison, though the harsher Scythians put out the eyes of even their slaves.

Then, in affairs of peace, as communities multiplied, and the fields had to be tilled and daily wants supplied,—there were no machineries of aid, every pair of hands was a unit of needed power,—slaves were bought and sold as of necessity, and a trade set up to supply the demand.

Julius Cæsar, whose name stands on the first page of English history, sold on one occasion in Gaul sixty-three thousand captives; and larger numbers were sometimes dispersed by victorious generals—ninety thousand, for instance, after the destruction of Jerusalem—more than could be sold. In this fashion the old world replenished its labour markets. Children well know the incident of six hundred years later, when golden-haired youths stood bound in the market-place of Rome, and Gregory asked the slave-dealer from what country they came. ‘They are Angles,’ was the answer. ‘Not Angles, but angels,’ he replied, in the familiar story that heralded the mission of Augustine. It shows Englishmen as slaves, and the practice of the nations then, at the epoch described by Milman as ‘that of the final Christianisation of the world,’ when heathenism was extinct, and new ideas possessed ‘the whole mind of man, in letters, arts,—as far as arts were cultivated,—habits, usages, modes of thought and in superstitions.’

We propose to trace the gradual steps by which the personal freedom of every man has come to be regarded

as his birthright. There are countries—amongst them populous territories little known—in which slavery still exercises an ascendent rule of terror; but between those past ages of bondage and the milder rule of to-day there is the difference between a world enslaved and a world enfranchised. Great changes, the product of conflicting centuries, have in important instances been brought to final issue by the strenuous efforts of the few; every such change achieved should be a spring of hope to the generations that follow.

CHAPTER II

HEBREW USAGE

The remote sometimes becomes the present, and it was so when the advocates of slavery in its later stages appealed to ancient Hebrew practice as their authority. Their arguments have been left to evidence the possibilities of a literalism which may darken counsel. It was urged that the negro race must be enslaved in order to fulfil the prophecy of Noah, 'Cursed be Caanan ; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren.' This was an argument in America down to the time of the Civil War. It has place, in a coarser form, in John Woolman's 'Journal,' written a hundred years before that final struggle. He refers to a friend, who said 'the negroes were understood to be the offspring of Cain, their blackness being the mark which God set upon him after he murdered Abel, his brother ; that it was the design of Providence they should be slaves, as a condition proper to the race of so wicked a man as Cain was.'

The proposal in England to abolish the slave trade was immediately met by an appeal to the usage allowed in the Bible. No one now would dare to take this ground, yet it was held with great tenacity, and consti-

tuted for years a serious impediment to progress. The point was raised even in the House of Lords. Not only has policy changed, but the system of interpretation on which the argument was based has vanished.¹

At the very beginning of Jewish history stood the incident of Joseph being drawn from the pit and sold 'for twenty pieces of silver' to a company of Ishmaelites going down to Egypt; and there is no more vivid picture of slavery as it was in ancient times than that which we find in the Book of Exodus, describing the life of the children of Israel, 'made bitter by hard bondage,' while Pharaoh's treasure cities rose under their toil. The Mosaic law did not uproot primitive customs, but breathed into them a wiser and more humane spirit. An age is reflected even in the influences by which it is transformed. As Moses legislated, so Paul taught, each under the social conditions of his own time. No one has more clearly brought out this

¹ The theory of the curse, we find Theodore Parker saying, has place in the *De Veritate* of Grotius. How large a space the Scripture question has occupied in the history we may gather from the elaborate treatise of Albert Barnes, the commentator (*An Inquiry into the Scriptural Views of Slavery*, Philadelphia, 1846), in which, while he protests against the fanaticism which would de-Christianise every slave-holder without regard to individual motive or circumstance, he bases the argument against slavery on the broadest grounds of Christian thought. After his analysis comes this conclusion: 'The defence of slavery from the Bible is to be and will soon be abandoned, and men will wonder that any defence of such a system could have been attempted from the Word of God. If the authors of these defences could live a little longer than the ordinary term of years allotted to man, they would themselves wonder that they could ever have set up such a defence; future generations will look upon the defences of slavery drawn from the Bible as among the most remarkable instances of mistaken interpretation and unfounded reasoning furnished by the perversities of the human mind.'

relationship than Goldwin Smith in the little book he sent forth during the American War, *Does the Bible sanction American Slavery?*¹

‘The state of things among the Hebrews, in the time of Moses,’ as he states it, ‘very much resembles that which the poems of Homer disclose to us as existing in heroic Greece; where society is still in course of transition from the family to the nation; where slavery is domestic, and on the whole mild, the lot of a slave under an average master being probably not worse than that of the hired labourer; where Paris, a king’s son, keeps his flock on Ida, and Nausicaa, a king’s daughter, goes out with her handmaidens to wash linen at the spring; where the faithful swineherd, Eumœus, stands almost upon a level with freemen, is treated by Ulysses as a friend and is deeply attached to his master and his master’s house; but where, nevertheless, “A man loses half his manhood on the day when he becomes a slave.”’

‘Such is the slave with which the Hebrew lawgiver deals, and he deals with it, not to establish or perpetuate it, but to mitigate it, restrict it, and to prepare the way for its “abolition.”’

Plato warned the Greeks against making slaves of their countrymen, but they did it on a large scale in their internecine wars. A similar question arose when the Kings of Syria and Israel attacked Judah and defeated Ahaz with great slaughter, taking captive ‘two hundred thousand women, sons and daughters,’ and bringing the spoil to Samaria. There, we are told,

¹ Oxford and London. Parker 1863.

Oded, a prophet of the Lord, went out to meet the conquering host and rebuked them. Had not the Israelites themselves sinned, and who were they that they should inflict this punishment on their brethren? He bade them take back the captives, 'for the fierce wrath of the Lord is upon you.' The incident which follows transcends all Grecian ideas: it is one of the finer passages of early history, almost forgotten. 'The men which were expressed by name rose up, and took the captives, and with the spoil clothed all that were naked among them, and arrayed them and shod them, and gave them to eat and drink, and anointed them, and carried all the feeble of them upon asses and brought them to Jericho . . . to their brethren' (2 Chron. xxviii. 1-15).

To keep a Hebrew in perpetual bondage, except by his own consent, was forbidden: 'If thou buy an Hebrew servant, six years shall he serve, and in the seventh he shall go out free for nothing.' When freed, he was not to be sent away empty, but with liberal gifts, that he might not fall into bondage again. If a slave desired to remain, he had first to declare his wish before a magistrate, his ears were bored with an awl to the door-post of his master's house, and after that he was held for the residue of his life, unless a general release intervened. Foreign slaves the Hebrews held in accordance with the custom of other nations. The general spirit of their treatment may be inferred from the frequent command 'not to vex or oppress' the stranger within the land—a law which must have covered all grades. Here are characteristic words,

addressed to the multitude which had come out of Egypt, before it had crossed the Jordan :

‘For the Lord your God is God of gods, and Lord of lords, a great God, a mighty and terrible, which regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward : He doth execute the judgment of the fatherless and widow, and loveth the stranger, in giving him food and raiment. Love ye therefore the stranger, for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt ’ (Deut. x. 17-19).

The life and limb of the slave were under the protection of the law. If the Roman Pollio, friend of Augustus, could throw unrebuked a slave or any part of him to the lampreys in his fishpond, the Hebrew master who might strike a slave so as to kill him was punished, and if he damaged eye or tooth of his servant by a blow, he had to let him go free. Marriage was allowed ; if the man’s wife entered service with him, she might leave with him ; if he married after entering the household, the woman was detained as belonging to it, and he could remain with her after his seven years, only as, by agreement, himself a slave. The bondman, contrary to the usage in Greece or Rome, was expected to take part with the freeman in the acts of national worship ; he partook of the Passover ; he shared the seventh-day rest. The prevailing spirit of the legislation which protected the poor, so tender in minute instructions, must also have tended to soften his lot.

One memorable incident of later time, when the Chaldeans laid siege to Jerusalem, shows both how these laws might be broken and how the prophets

defended the sacred rights of the people. The seven years' rule had been evaded, and manservants and maidservants brought back into servitude. Zedekiah, with the sense of impending judgments, persuaded the princes and the people to put this matter right ; they made a covenant, and broke it. Then came the word of Jeremiah, solemn and stern :

‘Therefore, thus saith the Lord, ye have not hearkened unto Me in proclaiming liberty, every one to his brother and every man to his neighbour ; behold, I proclaim a liberty for you, saith the Lord, to the sword, to the pestilence and to the famine ; and I will make you to be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth.’ It was like a sentence of doom, for not long afterwards they were swept away into Assyria, to endure a seventy years' captivity.

The Jubilee Year which restored estranged lands to those to whom they originally belonged, and gave freedom to those whom poverty had reduced to servitude, was an institution irregularly kept, but it became in after ages, and to enslaved peoples, the symbol of a great redemption yet to come.

The thinker and poet who, in the Book of Job, first dealt with the problems of life, had his vision of the true brotherhood :—

If I did despise the cause of my manservant or of my
maidservant,

When they contended with me ;

What then shall I do when God riseth up ?

And when He resisteth what shall I answer him ?

Did not He that made me in the womb make him ?

And did not One fashion us in the womb ?

CHAPTER III

THE CHATTELS OF A THOUSAND YEARS

THE ascendancy of slavery in ancient times shows beyond challenge when, the Roman conquests having run their course, the Emperor Justinian aspires to legislate for the world. The code of law which bore his name, and was the greatest reform of that era, accepted the distinction into freemen and slaves as its groundwork. It declared the equality of man in words that proved memorable, but it held whatever of privilege that suggested, as forfeited by the accidents which had made the slave—not only by servile descent, but by captivity in war, or self-rendition into slavery. Yet the outlook of the code was towards freedom: it breathed a larger humanity, and prepared the way for ameliorations in the condition of the slave.

For more than a thousand years the system has sway in Greek and Roman history. An immense body of men and women were held as chattels or property: we have no means of estimating how many. Every student of the subject knows the passage on slavery which Gibbon has placed near the beginning of his *History of the Rise and Fall of the Roman*

Empire; he holds it probable that 'the slaves were at least equal in number to the free inhabitants of the Roman world'—which would make the total slave population to have been about sixty millions. The conditions changed when the northern invaders drew after them their own hordes of slaves, the victims of war. The slave world of the centuries was, too, a larger world than the Roman. In Attica and in Corinthian territory the proportion was high. The numbers must have greatly varied in different centuries, and have drifted sometimes as the sands drift uncertainly with the winds. In Attica we are told there were, in the days of its glory, 21,000 citizens, 10,000 foreigners, and 400,000 slaves. A closer estimate of 365,000 has been regarded as approximately correct. The statement of Timæus that Corinth once had 460,000 slaves, and that of Aristotle that Ægina contained 470,000 may, however, be received with hesitation.

The hold which slavery had is strikingly shown in the legislation of Solon, nearly 600 years before Christ. He was called to power especially to assuage the violent quarrels between the poor and the rich. One occasion of trouble was the law of debtor and creditor, once prevalent in Greece, Italy, Asia, and a large portion of the world, according to which a debtor unable to fulfil his contract might be adjudged the slave of his creditor, and not only he himself, but his sons under age, his unmarried daughters and his sisters also. This was accounted a mortgage 'on the security of the body.'¹ Many of the smaller properties in

¹ Grote's *History of Greece*.

Attica were under mortgages,—a pillar inscribed with the amount of the loan standing on each plot, like a tombstone over the grave of freedom, for in countless cases irremediable slavery followed. The poor freemen were on the point of rebellion when Solon stepped in, cancelled these contracts, and forbade the creditor to enslave the debtor. It was a memorable reform, and many already sold into slavery were repurchased in foreign lands, and brought back to Attica. How this custom of enslavement for debt operated elsewhere is seen in the incident Livy relates of an old plebeian centurion in Rome, first impoverished by the plunder of the enemy, then reduced to borrow, and then seized as an insolvent, who claimed the protection of the people, in remembrance of past services, and roused their feelings by showing the marks of the slave-whip upon him.

In the time of Pericles, when the Parthenon was rising in its glory, an incident occurred in Athens which led to a revision of the list of citizens, the laws allowing none a place whose parents were not both Athenians. Aristotle relates that in purging the register as many as 4700 were struck off; Plutarch, writing long after, and not always to be trusted, is more definite, and states that these were all sold into slavery. The explanation seems to be that slavery was the penalty of the original law falling upon intruders not of pure blood. It seems incredible that a fourth of the body of reputed citizens should then have been swept into ruin at one stroke. That only 14,000 citizens of full privilege should have remained

after the scrutiny is remarkable evidence of the influence that may be exercised over generations by a select few, and goes far to justify the assertion of Pericles himself in one of his orations, that the lofty eminence of Attica was based on 'superiority of forethought and presence of mind.' Aristophanes in the *Wasps* has an allusion to this revision. Here in a line from the same comedy is incidental example of domestic discipline: 'If not, you shall breakfast on nothing in heavy fetters.'

Pericles, in one of his orations, urges that it is 'not disgraceful to any one to confess his poverty'; but he was speaking to freemen. Greece gloried in freedom, and won renown by its exercise; as a democracy it so gave place to the individual that the position of the slave makes a discord. It is evident, however, that the freeman had sometimes his questions as to the social system; he might himself become a slave, and had occasion to think of slavery from that point of view. The slaves were a mixed class, not marked by colour or uniform descent as in later times; they were of higher or lower grade, as the differing circumstances of capture or purchase had determined, though an ever-increasing body were slave-born; and they were of various degrees of capacity. It was the freeman who suffered under the law which gave the creditor power to make the debtor his slave, where Solon's reforms began; and it was the freeman who would have profited most had Plato's protest availed against the enslavement of Greeks. There appear to have been a few, as time went on, who would

have abolished altogether the custom of enslaving the conquered.

The Helots of Sparta were a class apart, descendants of a conquered race, and in that like the Penestæ in Thessaly. From such anecdotes as Plutarch has told respecting them they have been assumed to be the most debased of slaves, and their name has become a byword of contempt. According to him they were allowed to sing only mean songs and dance only ridiculous dances, and they were led intoxicated into the public halls to show young men the degradation of drunkenness; 'Those who say that a freeman in Sparta was most a freeman, and a slave most a slave,' remarks Plutarch, looking back over some centuries, 'seem well to have considered the difference of States.' The main body of Helots, however, were serfs, attached to the soil, the rustics of the villages, cultivating their lands and paying over their rent to the master, but 'enjoying their homes, wives, families and mutual neighbourly feelings apart from the master's view. They were never sold out of the country, and probably never sold at all,—belonging not so much to the master as to the State, which continually called upon them for military service, and recompensed their bravery or activity with a grant of freedom.'¹ But the service in the Spartan house was also all performed by members of the Helot class; there were few, if any, other slaves in the country. In war, a heavy-armed Spartan would be attended by several light-armed Helots. One terrible story told by Thucydides attests the power of

¹ Grote's *History of Greece*.

life or death which the State had over them. In the height of the Peloponnesian war, a secret fear of revolt arose. The Spartans issued a proclamation promising liberty to such Helots as had distinguished themselves, and invited them to come forward and claim the boon. Two thousand responded, the very pick of the body. They were manumitted, and led in festive procession round the temples ; each man wearing a garland. This adornment marked him out a victim, for every man of them subsequently disappeared, their doom remaining a mystery. Thus the men most formidable were got rid of. There was also a system of official espionage, under which at any time a Helot accounted dangerous might be assassinated. How little the life of a slave was regarded we may see also in the negotiations set on foot by Pausanias when he purposed to betray the Lacedemonians to the Persians. It was agreed between him and the Persian governor that the couriers they sent to one another should each of them on either side be put to death after he had delivered his packet or message, on the ground that dead men tell no tales.

This fear of the slaves was a perpetual shadow. It disturbed the peace of many a household. There were frequent outbreaks. When Athens was threatened with invasion the slaves were reported to be running away in 'prodigious numbers.' On another occasion the slaves in the mines rose, seized a fortress and held out against their masters. At Sparta they took advantage of an earthquake to break out in desperate insurrection.

Plato in his *Laws* speaks of the Lacedemonian system as 'of all Hellenic forms of slavery the most controverted and disputed about, some approving and some condemning it.' He alludes to the 'mischiefs which happen in States having many slaves who speak the same language,' and 'the numerous robberies and lawless life of the Italian banditti, as they are called.' His two remedies are, not to have slaves all of the same country; and to tend those retained more carefully, 'not only out of regard to them, but yet more out of respect to ourselves.' 'And the right treatment of slaves is to behave properly to them, and *to do to them, if possible, even more justice than to those who are our equals*; for he who naturally and genuinely reverences justice and hates injustice is discovered in his dealings with any class of men to whom he can easily be unjust.' We find him saying that 'many a man has found his slaves better in every way than brethren or sons, and many times have they saved the lives and property of their masters, and their whole house—such tales are well-known.' But he quotes 'the wisest of our poets,' who says, 'Far-seeing Zeus takes away half the understanding of men whom the day of slavery subdues.' For Homer in the dawn saw the virtue of the larger manhood of freedom.

In his *Politics* Aristotle accepts slavery as a necessity of his ideal State; he even speaks of the slave as an 'animate instrument' of the household, an essential part of its property, for he regards the rude manual labour which must be done as inevitably falling to such a class. At the same time he advances ideas

which, if developed and boldly applied, would have left but few Hellenic slaves. He would modify the slave system, and rest it not so much upon the conventions of established practice, determined it may be by accident or force, as upon nature. He would limit the number of slaves in a State to that which was requisite for its well-being, and he would make the relationship helpful to slave as well as master. There should be 'willing service.' The free spirit should have its freedom, and only the servile nature be enslaved, the man of muscle and sinew without intelligence being reserved for necessary tasks, while the man of capacity supplemented his deficiencies, and became friendly guardian as well as master. This principle might have brought a partial emancipation to Greece, but in all such theorising there was one fatal defect. 'From absolute rule to ownership,' it has been well said, 'is a great and momentous step. We may feel that the natural slave would be all the better for being ruled by a man of full virtue, but not for being his chattel.'¹ Aristotle was thinking of Greece. This notion of a 'natural' slavery reappeared in later centuries, not as the suggestion of philosophy, but as a maxim of brutal tyranny.

Already Greece had its slave trade. In the various States there were regular slave-markets, at which sales sometimes took place by auction; and slaves were bought for the purpose of making money by the hiring out of their labour. The vigorous Thracians enslaved and sold at Athens were not servile by nature; nor

¹ *The Politics of Aristotle*, by W. L. Newman.

were other races that afterwards suffered. Refined distinctions could never have stood against the cruelties of usurping force. A scholiast on Aristotle notes the saying of the orator Alcidas, of Athens (B.C. 432-411): 'God made all men free; nature has made no man a slave.' When spoken it was far in advance of ruling ideas. This was a thought that very slowly emerged; slavery continued in Greece. To what that might grow we see later when Rome in its turn subdued Epirus, and swept 150,000 of its population into slavery, inflicting permanent ruin.

CHAPTER IV

‘THE MEN OF IRON’

IT is not to be supposed that this slave world was all an agony of tears and pain, of stripes and death ; the whole gamut of life ran through it. In Greece the rule was milder, in Rome more severe. It was a saying of Demosthenes that a slave in Athens was better off than a free citizen in many other countries. The domestic service in both Greece and Rome was wholly done by slaves ; they also tended the fields ; they supplied the labour where there might be mines. The ordinary round of every day, which we make easy by mechanical contrivance, gave them many toilful tasks.

Within doors fifty serving-women sit ;
Some turn the mill and grind bright corn in it ;
And others weave at looms or twist the yarn,
While, like the leaves of a tall poplar, flit
The glancing shuttles through their finger-tips,
As from the warp-threads down the thin oil drips.

The women not only did the weaving by hand ; they brought the water home from the spring ; and it was their hard part to grind the corn in those first days when a rough stone was all that was used to

bruise it. Presently a pestle came into use, with a cross handle, large enough to be worked by bondmen, around whose necks was fixed a piece of wood, so constituted as to prevent their putting their hands to their mouths, and eating the grain.

Many public works were also carried out by slaves—some of the most majestic buildings of Rome were raised by them. The men, as the centuries went on, were employed as bakers, cooks, tailors, or in other trades. The fighting, with some exceptions, as in Sparta, was supposed to be done by the freemen; it was death for a slave to enter the Roman army. Thus Pliny consults Trajan as to two slaves found among the recruits. Yet there were occasions of danger greater than was known to attach to the employment of slaves who might prove treacherous, and they were often enrolled, and sometimes rewarded with freedom for their bravery.

They came frequently into friendly and confidential relations with the families to which they belonged. Euripides has shown the kindly side on which they were sometimes regarded. It must have been more than a poet's fancy which prompted him to put some of his deepest reflections¹ into the mouths of this class.

‘All the life of man,’ says the slave nurse in *Hippolytus*, ‘is full of pain, and there is no respite of toil; but whatever state there may be better than life, shrouding darkness hides it with its clouds. We seem indeed sorely fond of this life, because it glitters upon earth, through want of trial of another life, and of

¹ Mahaffy's *Social Life in Greece*.

proof of what there is beneath the earth; but on myths we drift about at random.'

A slave might be a physician—there were many such—a surgeon, an artist, a schoolmaster or a scribe. Themistocles, when by a dubious stratagem he wanted to deceive Xerxes before the battle of Salamis, sent a slave as his ablest messenger—the slave who was the tutor of his own children. Everybody, too, remembers the hunchbacked Æsop at a still earlier period, who, when he was given his freedom in consideration of his talents, and set out to travel, was invited to the court of Cræsus in Lydia. It was after his return to Athens that he composed that famous fable of the frogs asking Jupiter for a king, in which he warned the Athenians against Pisistratus. The learned slave was more common in Italy than in Greece, for Rome turned to account the greater culture of the Greek captives. These last were sometimes bought for their accomplishments and personal charm and transferred to oriental courts. This intermixture of capacity among slaves must have made it easier for the philosophers when they began to discuss the 'natural equality of man.' It is an interesting fact of classical history that slaves were set to copy MSS., thus doing what, in later centuries, the monks did in their voluntary servitude, and becoming, so to say, the compositors of the ancient world. Large sums were sometimes given for a slave of the higher order,—Gibbon says, 'many hundred pounds sterling,'—it being more a matter of pride than of utility to possess him. The price of a common slave varied with the market, and sometimes fell as

low as a few shillings—there are cases where he is valued at ‘three.’

It is worth recording that Horace himself was of slave extraction ; his father was a freedman of Venusia, who had been a *publicus servus*, or slave of the community. It is scarcely less interesting to recall Terence, who, nigh two hundred years earlier, was born in Carthage, captured as a slave and sold, to whom belonged the famous line—

Homo sum, humani nil a me alienum puto,

which was received with applause loud and long when first heard on the Roman stage. He was named from his master, a senator, who gave him, while still a young man, his freedom in recognition of his genius.

The slave had a mild protection in the fact that his life was an asset on the estate. But in Athens he had his special law of protection, his temple or grove of refuge, his niche in the family ; he might save enough money to purchase his freedom—he might privately indulge in his rites of religion. Political influences told sometimes in his favour.

In Rome, the brutalities to which the slave population was exposed might well stir revolt. It is difficult in these days to realise the awful authority of the Roman father, having, as head of the family, the power of life and death over sons and daughters, and also the power to sell children and grandchildren into slavery. With such a source we can understand the cruelty that through all its story tarnishes the Roman name. The slave might be scourged at the master’s will, or he might be crucified. His marriage was not recognised ;

his children were his master's property. Disobedience in a slave was frequently punished by selling him to those who trained gladiators. On the larger Roman estates slaves commonly worked in gangs and in chains, and lived in quarters of their own, under oversight,—an evidence of the sleepless fear they inspired. Terrible stories are recorded. Plutarch gives the name of a master who killed a slave to amuse a guest who had never seen a man die. These extreme cases might be balanced by others perhaps as extreme of kind masters, like Pliny, who sympathised with his slaves. What slave life could become shows plainly in the comedies of Terence and Plautus, though these, it must be recollected, have a Greek background. Here is a speech from Plautus that tells a tale :—

‘Blows are continually falling on my shoulders; the whip is always at work; I am sent into the country to slave for the family there; when my master sups abroad, I have to carry a torch before him; by my labours I have earned a right to freedom, and am growing grey in slavery.’

‘An accidental murmur, a cough, a sneeze,’ says a student of Nero’s time,¹ ‘was punished with rods. Mute, motionless, and fasting, the slaves had to stand by while their masters supped. A brutal and stupid barbarity often turned a house into the shambles of an executioner, sounding with scourges, chains, and yells. . . . Even women inflicted upon their female slaves punishments of the most cruel atrocity for faults of the most venial character.’

¹ Farrar’s *Seekers after God*.

The old and weak were often left to starvation on the island of Æsculapius in the Tiber. The stern Cato counselled selling the old, and had no scruple as to sweating his slaves. No slave could hold property, though in later times if he traded he was allowed a small *peculium*.

There was the relief of manumission, which was a formal ceremony and frequent, but a tax was placed upon it as the number of freemen increased. The abuses that arose at certain periods even in this association appear in Juvenal's allusion to slaves who were made knights, and his complaint that the bestowal of honours and privileges on emancipated slaves was a feature in the degradation of society.

One quaint custom of the most splendid days of Roman life asserted the oneness of men with an emphasis that was not suspected, and could not have been exceeded by any phrase of the Stoics. When a triumph was decreed to a victor returning from war, and he came attended by his army, his captives, and his spoils in all pomp, there was borne with him in his chariot a slave, who had charge of the amulets that warded off the evil eye, and the eye of envy, and whose duty also it was to whisper to him that he, too, was mortal.¹

The essential relationships, putting off this stateliness, grotesquely showed in the Saturnalia,—they cannot be long hidden under any theory of government. This was the only festival of the national religion in which the slaves were allowed any part. It

¹ *Et sibi consul*

Ni placeat, curru servus portatur eodem.—JUVENAL.

was supposed to be in commemoration of the happy reign of Saturn. Although falling in December, it is believed to have been in its origin a rural festival, which celebrated the final ingathering of the fruits of the field. The sacrifices were followed by riotous fun. One chief feature was the social *bouleversement*. The slave was free to make merry with his masters; all classes were boisterous as in a carnival. A peculiar dress was worn; slaves are described as wearing the dress of freedom, and reclining at banquets even in their masters' clothes, while the masters waited on them. 'Tis probable,' says an old Scotch writer, 'this was done in Memory of the Liberty enjoyed in the Golden Age under *Saturn* before the names of Servant and Master were known to the World.' Let who will believe it. It is worth noting that Peru, before it was trodden by Pizarro, had similar festivals of the sun and fields which also ended in unrestrained revelry.

The number of slaves in a house varied with the rank and wealth of its owner, and grew larger with ostentation, often reaching five hundred or a thousand, and in a few instances three or four thousand. By old custom, if a master was found dead, every slave of the household was at once and without trial put to death. In one case, debated in the Senate, a wealthy citizen had promised freedom and did not give it. The disappointed slave assassinated his master, whereupon the law was carried out, and the four hundred slaves of that house were all executed. Rome waxed angry, but submitted.¹

¹ Tacitus, *Annals*, xiv. 42.

No terrorism could keep down revolt. Seneca wrote, 'As many slaves, so many foes.' Tacitus mentions the growing alarm of Rome at the increasing number of slaves. The 'half-savage slave-herdsmen,' as Mommsen calls them, were sometimes masters of a country district: in one instance, so many were found involved in a conspiracy that nearly seven thousand men were condemned as criminals. In Sicily there were frequent risings. The corn-growers held captives from all parts, and badly treated them. They had most of them been taken in war, and some of them had been pirates, so that when they conspired to take up arms, they made a formidable stand. The first outbreak was provoked by the cruelties of one rich man, who was put to death with many others; his wife was given to the slave-women, who tortured her and threw her over the brow of a hill; but their young daughter, who had sought to comfort and befriend the oppressed, was sent by discriminating slaves under a trusty guard to the safe-keeping of some friends. A Syrian slave, who professed to have the gift of prophecy, to breathe fire, and do other wonders, caught the hour. Six thousand men gathered round him; he called himself king, and his slave-wife a queen. A wiser Greek became his counsellor, and these two were joined by a Cilician, who made a good captain. For three years they held their ground, defeating more than one Roman prætor, but were at last betrayed and overcome. A second revolt lasted nearly as long. The occasion was different. The senate made an order that all slaves in any Roman province who were subjects or citizens

of any State in alliance with Rome should be set free. In Sicily so many were made free under these terms that the slave-owners took alarm, and bribed the prætor to stay his hand. Then the slaves stole away to the temple of the Palici, a traditional refuge, and bound themselves together by solemn oaths. They chose another soothsayer as their king ; and another Cilician, who also claimed mysterious powers, brought another body to aid them. The war was so desperately fought that the Romans had to despatch a consul with a full army to bring it to a close.¹

The most memorable of the servile wars was that led by the gladiators, which broke out B.C. 73, and was maintained for two years. Too long had their fellows been 'butchered to make a Roman holiday.' The name of their leader, Spartacus, still lives in fame. A Thracian shepherd, strong-limbed and clear-headed, he escaped with thirty of his companions from a house in Capua, and quickly gathered round him a body of men as resolute as himself. The woods and desert places were at first their camping ground. Their numbers grew from ten thousand to forty-five thousand, and as he won one victory after another, Rome began to tremble, and all Italy was stirred, for everywhere were sympathetic slaves. The Crassus who grew to renown was sent against him ; in the last desperate battle twelve thousand of the slave army fell, and Crassus returned in triumph. The tradition tells how Spartacus was wounded, and fought, after the fashion of a certain Northumbrian, on his knees, smote from behind his

¹ See Freeman's *Sicily*.



GLADIATORS IN THE ROMAN ARENA.

shield with a fierce will, and fell dead on the dead he had slain. One account has it that he would have led the great body of Roman slaves across the Alps to the plains whence many of them had come, but that his army chose plunder, and so met defeat.

Four hundred years later when Rome fell before Alaric, and the conqueror entered in the dead of night, forty thousand slaves joined his army, and had their share of revenge in the wild tumult that shook the world.

Carthage, the chief trading city of the west, held a peculiar position. Her armies were in large part mercenaries, the picked soldiers of other countries; and her preponderant wealth enabled her long to sustain this policy in face of many risks. One source of this wealth was in the gold and silver mines she had unearthed in Spain, where multitudes of slaves perished underground, or were swept away by floods. Polybius describing them at a later date estimates the number of slaves employed there at 40,000, and says that every day they gave over to the Romans between eight hundred and nine hundred pounds worth of treasure.

It seems necessary to retrace these various facts, many of them familiar, if we would place the progress of events in one view.

When a freeman sold himself into slavery, or his children, or when children exposed were allowed to be taken and sold, it should not be overlooked that such actions sometimes operated as a rough irregular poor law.

CHAPTER V

THE NEW EVANGEL

THE hideous tragedies of Nero's life seem still to mark the limit of human crime. The wisdom of Seneca darkens in association with such a court. But he writes with genial tenderness of the slave. 'I am glad to learn,' he says, in one of his letters to Lucilius, 'that you live on terms of familiarity with your slaves ; it becomes your prudence and your erudition. Are they slaves? Nay, they are men. Slaves? Nay, they are companions. Slaves? Nay, humble friends. Slaves? Nay, fellow-slaves, if you but consider that fortune has power over you both.' One wonders whether he knew a certain lame Phrygian slave Epictetus by name. Seneca was tutor, and in at least one lamentable instance secretary, of Nero. Epictetus was the slave of Epaphroditus, who was a man of evil history, freedman and favourite of the same emperor. He was allowed by his master to attend the lectures of one of the most eminent Stoics of that time, and he had obtained his freedom when Domitian (A.D. 94) issued an edict expelling all philosophers from Rome. Epictetus took refuge in Nicopolis, a city of Epirus.

His *Encheiridion* contains a few sentences on slavery. In a brief parable he pleads for the kindlier treatment of the slave. 'Wilt thou not remember who thou art, and whom thou rulest, that they are kinsmen, brethren by nature, the progeny of Zeus?' Then come these noble words :—

'That which thou wouldst not suffer thyself seek not to lay upon others. Thou wouldst not be a slave, look to it, that others be not slaves to thee. For if thou endure to have slaves, it seems that thou thyself art first of all a slave. For virtue hath no communion with vice, nor freedom with slavery.

'As one who is in health would not choose to be served by the sick, nor that those dwelling with him should be sick, so neither would one that is free bear to be served by slaves, or that those living with him should be slaves.'

Mr. Rolleston, in a note attached to his translation, remarks, 'So far as we know, this is the only condemnation of slavery ever uttered by any Pagan thinker.'¹

Another voice was already speaking to the world. A greater than all earth's thinkers had trodden its darkened ways. The cross which had been for centuries the punishment of slaves, had become the symbol of a new hope.

Juvenal tells of a Roman lady who ordered a cross to be set up for a slave. Her husband asks what is the crime that deserves this punishment, where is the witness? Should there not be pause before the death

¹ *The Teaching of Epictetus*, translated by T. W. Rolleston.

of a man? 'Idiot!' she answers, 'is a slave a man? As I wish I command, my will is reason enough.'¹

The redemption of Christ gave human life another value. He was seen in many a beautiful image, and in many a more gracious act, seeking out the least and lowest, the sinful and most sorrowful. His words gave a strange significance to both suffering and hope. No symbol occurs more frequently in the Catacombs than the Good Shepherd. 'What man of you, having an hundred sheep, and having lost one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it?' The 'one' of humanity wakes in such teaching into new mystery and glory. Men of to-day have lost the freshness of the wonder; but as bare history more than creed, was there ever more amazing contrast than this gospel to the practice of the ancient world? The personal thus ennobled was summoned to obey an altruistic law. 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.' There could be none more revolutionary.

It was a great step forward from Nero to the hardy Trajan (A.D. 98). He was the emperor who walked into his palace from the street, taking, with the empress, possession of his imperial home as any common citizen might of his house. He built a magnificent forum, and his memory aspires in the Dacian column with its circling procession of captives, beneath which he was interred. The populace were entertained by him with gladiatorial shows for a hundred and twenty-three days, such is the blinding influence of custom over

¹ *Satire* vi. 218-222.

the best. A beneficent innovation signalised his reign in the care he bestowed on orphan and destitute children. A man of genius was his counsellor, one Dion Chrysostom. He was one of those who escaped from Rome when Domitian's decree expelled the philosophers, and he is said to have made his way to the distant frontier, carrying with him a work of Plato and a speech of Demosthenes. After the accession of Nerva he returned to Rome. Trajan showed him the most marked favour, not only visiting him, but even allowing him to ride by his side in his triumphal car. Amongst his writings that remain are four orations addressed to Trajan on the virtues of a sovereign. Homer was his text. Lecky calls attention to him as 'perhaps the earliest writer of the Roman Empire who denounced hereditary slavery.'¹ Newman adds that in one of his *Oration*s he refers to a general feeling that the slave by birth was a slave in the truest sense, and then goes on to reason that slaves by birth are descended from those who have been enslaved through war, and that this form of slavery 'the oldest, and that which has given birth to all the rest' (as he assumes), 'is very weak in point of justice.' His conclusion points still further. It is that 'the true slave is the man who is unfree and servile in soul.'²

When the great Ambrose of Milan refused the Emperor Theodosius (A.D. 379) admission to the church because of his treacherous massacre of thousands in the circus at Thessalonica, the emperor pleaded, 'The

¹ Lecky's *History of European Morals*.

² Newman, *On the Politics of Aristotle*.

church of God is open to slaves and beggars. To me only it is closed—the door of the church and heaven.'

This casual recognition of the slave's place as then established in the Christian church accords with its whole history. It was foreshadowed when Paul spoke on Mars' Hill of the unity of the human race; it was realised in the letter he wrote to Philemon at the time he was himself a prisoner, when he sent back to his master the Phrygian slave, Onesimus, whom he had won to Christ. His words are like a draught from the well undefiled of Christian philanthropy.

'Wherefore, though I might be much bold in Christ to enjoin thee that which is convenient, yet for love's sake I rather beseech thee, being such an one as Paul the aged, and now also a prisoner of Jesus Christ. I beseech thee for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds; which in time past was to thee unprofitable, but now profitable to thee and to me. Whom I have sent again, thou therefore receive him, that is mine own bowels; whom I would have retained with me, that in thy stead he might have ministered unto me in the bonds of the gospel, but without thy mind would I do nothing, that thy benefit should not be as it were of necessity, but willingly. For perhaps he therefore departed for a season, that thou shouldst receive him for ever; not now as a servant, but above a servant, as a brother beloved, especially to me, but how much more unto thee, both in thy flesh and in the Lord? If thou count me therefore a partner, receive him as myself. If he hath wronged thee or oweth thee ought, put that on mine account. I, Paul, have written

it with mine own hand, I will repay it ; albeit I do not say to thee how thou owest unto me even thine own self besides. Yea, brother, let me have joy of thee in the Lord ; refresh my bowels in the Lord' (Philemon 8-20).

The whole letter is in harmony with the advice he had given to Corinth, where there must have been many slaves among the first hearers of his message :—

'Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called. Art thou called being a servant? Care not for it, but if thou mayst be made free, use it rather. For he that is called in the Lord being a servant, is the Lord's freeman ; likewise also he that is called, being free, is Christ's servant. Ye are bought with a price, be not ye the servants of men' (1 Corinthians vii. 20-23).

Such counsel was in exact accord with the teaching of the Stoical school, and with the thought of true men in all times, unnamed by philosophy, that externals are never more than the husk and shell of life. 'No one,' said Epictetus, 'is a slave whose will is free.' It was the only practicable counsel of that age, for to awake discontents that might lead on to servile revolt could only have broken society to pieces.

The letter of Ignatius to Polycarp, as the first of the Christian centuries was passing, has been sometimes quoted :—

'Despise not slaves of either sex ; yet let them not be puffed up, but serve more faithfully to the glory of God, that they may obtain a better liberty from God.

Let them not desire to be set at liberty at the charge of the church, lest they be found slaves of lust.'

Plato speaks of 'the slavery of the soul,' as if it were more to be dreaded than the slavery of the body. He describes a soul 'freighted with abundance of slavery and servility, those parts of it which were the best being enslaved, while a small part, and that the most corrupt and insane, is dominant.' He points out that 'a tyrant nature can never taste real freedom.' Concerning the man who 'ruthlessly enslaves the divinest part of himself,' he suggests that he ought to be made the servant of that best man 'in whom the divine element is supreme,' thus foreshadowing the idea developed by Aristotle, who was at starting his pupil. In wise and strong words he pleads for 'cultivating the noblest principle of the nature,' that it may become in its own sphere 'guardian and sovereign.'

Cowper expressed much the same thought when, in the quiet of his English home, he wrote :—

He is the freeman whom the truth makes free,
And all are slaves beside. There's not a chain
That hellish foes, confederate for his harm
Can wind around him, but he casts it off
With as much ease as Samson his green withes.

We of these later times have in contrast the beautiful words of the simple English collect, alluding to the Christian life of dependence upon God, '*whose service is perfect freedom.*' Herein dwells the spirit that is stronger than all conditions. A free soul makes possible a free man, and a free man makes possible a free country. The processes may be broken, they

are slow, but the progression is a sequence towards which history points.

Milton reverses the thought when, in *Paradise Regained*, he looks back on imperial Rome :—

What wise and valiant man would seek to free
These, thus degenerate, by themselves enslaved,
Or would of inward slaves make outward free?

There have been evil days when this freedom has been jeopardised by the tyranny of ideas, when men have sought to put shackles on the soul itself, and the sharpest of all scourges have been those of the priest. But there is a spirit of liberty in Christianity that refuses to be crushed. There was a large humanity in its early teaching that led on to brotherhood. Paul's argument is never so intricate or lofty but it recognises the common lot. Men are all one before it. 'There is neither Jew nor Greek,' he wrote to the Galatians, in that epistle which became, in things spiritual, a charter of emancipation to the Christian church, '*there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female, for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.*' It was the practical apostle, James, who said, 'Have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons.'

This inclusion of the slave was in consonance with the freedom of acquaintanceship which custom sometimes allowed, but it gave him religious privileges denied him everywhere else.

Meanwhile the gradual course of events produced some changes. Hadrian (A.D. 117) initiated a reform

by taking from the master the power of life and death. His successor Antoninus Pius, carried it further by placing the life of the slave under the protection of the law. Other privileges followed. It is probable that political and social considerations had a place in these changes, and that there were reasons of state for checking the reckless waste of human life.

The world entered upon a mighty spiritual conflict as Christianity spread. The fiercest storms of persecution could not stay its advance; neither the anger of Diocletian, nor the philosophy of Marcus Aurelius, who both regarded it in political aspects. It could have been but a handful of the slave population that was affected by it at the beginning. One thing must have been soon apparent—namely, that the new faith changed relationships by the facts on which it rested. It was not the brotherly spirit of the new communities, not the large-heartedness of the Apostles, making no distinctions, but the veritable gospel which they brought alike for all, that was the reforming energy. Bond and free worshipped the one Lord, shared the same atonement, met at the same commemorative supper, cherished the same hope of life everlasting. There came presently a time when slave after slave was admitted to minister in the church, and some of their number rose to high positions. This new experience at the centre of the world's history meant in the process of the years a revolution. How vast the spiritual change which now became possible, the genius of Augustine essayed to portray in the *City of God*. In it alone he saw true liberty—the liberty of

those whom Christ has made free from sin. 'The history of progress,' it has been truly said, 'is not the history of man only, but of God respecting the liberty of men, and doing invincibly His work by their free hands, almost always without their knowledge, and oftentimes in their despite.'¹ Lecky has made a remark well worth pondering here, that 'Christianity for the first time gave the servile virtues the foremost place—humility, obedience, gentleness, patience, resignation—rudimentary virtues in the Christian character, though disregarded in the pagan.'

In the Catacombs slaves are never mentioned in the Christian inscriptions, but only and rarely freedmen, who were perhaps those who had been manumitted on the occasion of baptism, or that of the death of some person beloved. Thus one inscription mentions that on such an occasion six slaves were liberated, *manumissimus sex*. And this is all in harmony with the saying of Lactantius, in the fourth century: 'Among us there is no difference between slaves and masters, nor any reason why we share the name of brethren amongst us, except that we believe ourselves to be equal.'²

Indications of a more humane feeling multiply as we pass onward to the time when Christianity was established as the religion of the empire. Constantine (A.D. 314) declared that liberty was a right which could not be taken away—once acquired it was irrevocable; he provided that manumission might be made a religious service, having legal force.

¹ Lilly's *Chapters in European History*.

² Marucchi, *Elemens d'Archeologie Chretienne*.

CHAPTER VI

THE DAWNING OF LIBERTY

THE pressure of the northern people upon the south was another of the influences that changed society, Gibbon has suggested that the supply of slaves diminished with the cessation of conquest, but it appears to have been for long a fluctuating quantity. The victory of Stilicho over Rhagaisus at Florence threw two hundred thousand Goths or other Germans into the market, and lowered the price of a slave from twenty pieces of gold to one.¹ The codes of the barbaric nations under Rome all regarded man as a marketable commodity. Tacitus has described the milder rule of "Germania," even in earlier history. There the slave had a separate home, and paid rent in grain, or cattle, or other kind. To punish a slave with stripes, to load him with chains, or condemn him to hard labour, was unusual, but the master had the power of life. The conquerors did not cultivate the soil.

Many gradual causes combined in the course of years to undermine slavery. In Greece the impoverish-

¹ Milman's *History of Latin Christianity*.

ment of the wealthier classes under conquest was one of them. Another was the system of Roman taxation, and the extortions which multiplied debtors ; the mode of levying the tax under the later empire, on the number of labourers whether bond or free, tended to diminish the distance between classes, and operated to raise the slave to the rank of serf.¹ Local and accidental circumstances also broke the once uniform rule.

In the Justinian period, according to Milman, the runaway slave was the outcast of society. 'At first he was denied the privilege of asylum. It was a crime to conceal him ; he might be seized anywhere, punished by his master according to his will ; and, according to some codes, he might be slain in case of resistance. The influence of the church appears in some singular and contradictory provisions. The churches themselves were slave-holders. There were special provisions to protect their slaves. By the law of the Alemanni, whoever concealed an ecclesiastic's slave was condemned to a triple fine ; in the Bavarian law, whoever incited the slave of a church or a monastery to flight, must pay a mulct of fifteen solidi, and restore the slave, or replace him by another. The church gradually claimed the right of asylum for fugitive slaves. The slave who had taken refuge at the altar was to be restored to his master only on his promise of remitting the punishment.'

The first prohibition of the traffic in slaves was confined to the sale of Christians to pagans, Jews, and

¹ See Finlay's *History of Greece*.

in some cases to heretics. As Greeks would have shielded Greeks, so Christians at the first mainly condemned the enslavement of Christians. There were then, as since, few who took the broader view which belongs to a universal claim, each for his own being in all times a maxim of convenience within the church or without.

‘The Jews were the great slave merchants of the age.¹ But it was the religious, rather than the personal, freedom which was taken under the protection of the law. The capture and sale of men was part of the piratical system along all the shores of Europe, specially on the northern coasts. The sale of pagan prisoners of war was authorised by Clovis, after the defeat of the Alemanni ; by Charlemagne, after that of the Saxons ; by Henry the Fowler, as to that unhappy race which gave their name to the class.’ Gibbon, it should be added, explains that the word *slave* arose in oriental France where the princes and bishops were rich in Sclavonian captives.

The crimes done under the shadow of Christianity, and even in its name, looked at alone, have been many times more than enough to justify the most bitter attacks of its enemies. When Christendom supplanted heathendom, it was not as a realm of righteousness. The way of revelation was not in swift descent from the pinnacle of the temple, but by the toilsome path of suffering to the cross, and so the struggle of the nations has ever been by slow and painful stages from darkness into light. The clearing of the gloom showed now in

¹ Milman's *History of Latin Christianity*.

the more frequent redemption of captives, and especially in the repurchase of slaves in order to restore them to freedom, which came to be regarded as an act of piety in both the West and the East. Ambrose of Milan sold the rich ornaments of his cathedral in order to rescue captives, and similar acts are recorded of elsewhere. Step by step justice came nearer, and as she showed her face, a new tenderness sprang to meet her. Loring Brace, whose careful analysis (*Gesta Christi*) of Christian influence in the deeds rather than in the creeds of the faith might be a text-book in the churches, mentions thirty-seven early church councils as passing acts favourable to slaves. Gregory the Great appears to have been the first who gave enfranchisement on the ground of the common equality of mankind. His words take high ground: 'Since our Redeemer, the Builder of all nature, set apart for this, has voluntarily assumed human flesh that by favour of His divinity (the chain by which we were bound being broken) He might restore us to our pristine liberty, it is a wholesome act if men produced by nature free at first, but subjected to the yoke of slavery by the law of nations, be restored by act of the emancipated to that liberty in which they were born.' It is pleasant to recall that this was the Gregory who had a kindly word for the 'angels' in the slave market at Rome.

We find one later synod condemning the sale of Christians as slaves, 'because Christ had redeemed slaves as well as freemen, by the shedding of His blood.' The turbulent Theodorus Studites, head of the monastery of Studium in Constantinople, who died in 826,

had seen further. He left a will, in which he condemned the owning of slaves by monks or monasteries, 'on the ground that the slave, no less than the freeman is made in the image of God.'¹

Thus, through the slow succession of the centuries the light of liberty dawned clearly and more clearly upon individual souls. These were thoughts that were to reappear again and again, and decide great issues as time went on. They were reiterated with emphasis, for instance, when Sweden, before the end of the thirteenth century, passed a law forbidding the sale of slaves on the express ground 'That it was in the highest degree criminal for Christians to sell men whom Christ had redeemed by His blood,'—a law which was acted upon from that time forward. The independence of a brave people had saved Scandinavia from serfdom.

The number of slaves throughout the Netherlands was very large. A multitude had sheltered in the Bishopric of Utrecht. 'The ferocious inroads of the Normans,' says Motley,² 'scared many weak and timid persons into servitude. They fled, by throngs, to church and monastery, and were happy, by enslaving themselves, to escape the more terrible bondage of the sea-kings. During the brief dominion of the Norman Godfrey every free Frisian was forced to wear a halter around his neck. The lot of a church slave was freedom in comparison. To kill him was punishable by a heavy fine. He could give testimony in court; could inherit; could make a will; could even plead before the law, if law could be found.'

¹ Finlay's *History of the Byzantine Empire*. ² Motley's *Dutch Republic*.

CHAPTER VII

THE SLAVES OF CHRISTENDOM

There stood at the centre of Rome a pillar from which radiated the roads that bore its eagles to empire. Not the wisest Cæsar, musing there, could have conceived of that vast unity breaking to pieces, so that one city should become the rival in arms of another, and even in the same city street vie with street, or house with house. It is a dream of wonder as one stands there to-day, within reach of the titanic ruins of the Cæsars' palace, and recalls the history as it has been written. The reconstruction of Europe from that chaos was as mixed a process as the evolution of a continent, and as impossible to describe in a few words. Slavery lingered long, but vanished; serfdom took its place, the serfs being the slaves of the soil, attached to the land and sold with it, but glad of the protection of the stronger power that held it. Then the feudal system took form. The Crusades represented an absolutely new force that recombined and redivided men. New kingdoms, new creeds, gave quickening effect to undiscerned tendencies. The peasants' wars portended intellectual revolution. It was as though another world awaited ordered life.

The Justinian Code was trampled out of sight by invading feet, and its 'pandects' were only by accident rediscovered in the twelfth century. The iron rule of Rome crumbled before new races, bringing a strength that was freer. They were accounted barbarians, but with them was the future. Desolating wars were followed by pestilence and famine; cultivated lands lapsed into marsh and wolf-haunted forest. The condition of Europe one thousand years after the coming of Christ appears in the wail that then went up. Terror fell upon the people as they apprehended the near approach of the day of doom. The social disorganisation was reflected in their turbulent fears. They gave way to the wildest excesses; the fields were left untilled; the ordinary processes of business were stayed. The preacher's voice of warning was heard in the streets of Paris. Four kings and thousands of nobles retired to the cloister. Men gave back their ill-gotten gains, and surrendered to penance; others, to win respite, manumitted their slaves. A council met at Limoges, where the princes bound themselves to abstain from unlawful feuds. 'A Truce of God' was instituted, which pledged them to seasons of peace, and presented a mild barrier to the general alarm. Arabia, from before Mohammed, had had its pilgrimage month of peace; the half of Christendom now proposed a more complete abasement. It is pitiful reading that, in the five years after 1015, not a country could be named in the whole western world that was not destitute of bread.¹ In France, out of seventy-five years,—the reigns of Hugh Capet and

¹ Hallam's *History of the Middle Ages*.

his two successors,—forty-eight were years of famine. Human flesh was smuggled into the market. Even in that late time, numbers sold themselves into slavery to secure subsistence.

‘The Crusades,’ says Motley, in his *History of the Dutch Republic*, ‘made great improvements in the condition of the serfs. He who became a soldier of the Cross, was free upon his return, and many were adventurous enough to purchase liberty at so honourable a price. Many others were sold or mortgaged by the crusading knights, desirous of converting their property into gold before embarking upon their enterprise. The purchasers or mortgagees were, in general, churches and convents, so that the slaves thus alienated obtained at least a preferable servitude. The place of the absent serfs was supplied by free labour, so that agricultural and mechanical occupations now opened an ever widening sphere for the industry and progress of freemen.’

The gradual growth of new communities in the chartered cities of the north proved a powerful instrument of social change. They were a sign of wealth which was soon to put on new powers. The extension of commerce created other influences that tended to divide the rule of might. The advent of republics in the southern cities was a discipline in new liberties. The unchartered guilds gave another sphere to individual life. Over immense territories, the old relationships were broken by the multitude of newcomers from other lands; the framing of fresh bonds was made easier by mutual needs. The great bought

allegiance by concessions ; the lowly cared less for right than for protection from the violence of the times, for the masterless man was the defenceless man. Then, as the privileges of the towns grew, the long-suffering serfs broke into discontent ; it was symptomatic of a wider feeling when they poured down upon London in hundreds of thousands. Many causes were gradually operative—the growth, for instance, hardly to be tracked in England, of the beginning of a free peasantry ; the questions provoked by the payment of wages ; the new terms of service and tenure ; the impoverishment of nobles, which inclined them to bargain for rental ; then the awful desolation of the Black Death throughout Europe ; the scarcity of labour that arose from it ; and the first germination of ideas that were really revolutionary.

The feudal system in Greece seems a grotesque intrusion ; Venice gave it place. She herself long sustained a vigorous slave trade, and exchanged human beings for the Asiatic luxuries which her merchants sought. She ruled with a strong hand where she had power. In Cyprus, for example, every man was bound to work for the State two days a week, and every one had to pay to the State a third part of his income.

Robertson, glancing back at this period in his *History of Charles V.*, has succinctly described the process of transformation :—

‘As soon as the representatives of communities gained any degree of credit and influence in the legislature, the spirit of laws became different from what it had formerly been ; it flowed from new

principles ; it was directed towards new objects. Equality, order, the public good and the redress of grievances, were phrases and ideas brought into use, and which grew to be familiar in the statutes and jurisprudence of the European nations. Almost all the efforts in favour of liberty in every country in Europe have been made by this new power in the legislature. The freedom and independence which one part of the people obtained inspired the other with the most ardent desire of acquiring the same privileges, and their superiors, sensible of the advantages they had derived by former concessions to their dependents, were less unwilling to gratify them. The enfranchisement of slaves became more frequent ; and the monarchs of France, prompted by necessity, no less than by their inclination to suppress the power of the noble, endeavoured to render it general. Louis X. (A.D. 1315) and Philip the Long issued ordinances declaring that as all men were by nature free-born, and as their kingdom was called the kingdom of Franks, they determined that it should be so in reality as well as in name ; therefore they appointed that enfranchisements should be granted throughout the whole kingdom upon just and reasonable conditions. These edicts were carried into immediate execution within the regal domain. The example of their sovereigns, together with the expectation of considerable sums which they might raise by this expedient, led many of the nobles to set their dependents at liberty ; and servitude was gradually abolished in almost every province of the kingdom. In Italy, the establishment of republican

government in their great cities, the genius and maxims of which were extremely different from those of the feudal policy, together with the ideas of equality which the progress of commerce had rendered familiar, gradually introduced the practice of enfranchising the ancient predial slaves. In some provinces of Germany, the persons subject to this species of bondage were released ; in others the vigour of their state was mitigated. In England, as the spirit of liberty gained ground, the very name and idea of personal servitude, without any formal interposition of the legislature to prohibit it, was totally banished.'

According to Hallam, 'the eleventh and twelfth centuries saw the number of slaves in Italy begin to decrease ; early in the fifteenth, a writer quoted by Muratori speaks of them as no longer existing. The greater part of the peasants in some countries of Germany had acquired their liberty before the end of the thirteenth century ; in other parts, as well as in all the northern and eastern regions of Europe, they remained in a sort of villeinage till the present age. Some very few instances of predial servitude have been discovered in England, so late as the time of Elizabeth.'

The influences which sometimes brought men together in more independent groups were strikingly illustrated in Leon and Castile, where villeinage never found footing. The territory recovered from the Moors was occupied by the noble who won it, and who built towns and invited Christian settlers. 'Since nothing,' as Hallam remarks, 'makes us forget the arbitrary distinctions of rank so much as participation

in any common calamity, every man who had escaped from the great shipwreck of liberty and religion in the mountains of Asturias was invested with a personal dignity which gave him value in his own eyes and those of his country.'

Another illustration of the many personal interventions that helped to modify the social conditions is found in William Wallace. Of him Green says, 'He was the first to sweep aside the technicalities of feudal law and to assert freedom as a national birthright. Amidst the despair of nobles and priests he called the people itself to arms,' and his discovery of the value of the stout peasant 'changed in the end the face of Europe.'¹

In England the sparseness of the population helped the villein to freedom, for it was not easy to reclaim a fugitive. By the middle of the fourteenth century the great body of the peasantry had become hired labourers. Enactments were made as to wages; the condition and character of the lower classes improved. At the same time new ideas began to ferment among the people. 'The common origin and common destination of mankind,' writes Hallam, 'with every other lesson of equality which religion supplies to humble or to console, were displayed with coarse and glaring features (in the Scriptural "moralities" which were then exhibited). The familiarity of such ideas has deadened their effects upon our mind; but when a rude peasant, surprisingly destitute of religious instruction during that corrupt age of the church, was led at once to

¹ Green's *Short History of the English People*.

these impressive truths, we cannot be astonished at the intoxication of mind they produced.'

The slave is already in England when we first find ourselves there. He may be, as Stubbs narrates in his *Constitutional History*, of British extraction, captured or purchased, or of the common German stock, descended from the slaves of the first colonists. There is the slave who works for hire; the slave who cannot pay his debts; the man who has sold himself and his children to escape starvation; there is one slave who works in the house and another who works in the farm. They are regarded as part of the owner's stock; they have no legal rights. 'In some respects,' says Stubbs, 'the practice of the law is better than the theory; the slave is entitled to his two loaves a day, and his holydays are secured to him' [a slave working on Sunday at his master's command became free]; 'he can purchase his freedom with savings which, in some unexplained way, the law has allowed him to keep, and the spiritual law can enforce a penance on the master for ill-treating him. But his status descends to his children; all his posterity, unless the chain is broken by emancipation, are born slaves.'¹

When Strabo spoke of slaves as an 'export' of Britain, it was as a conquered land it produced them; but there was a thriving trade for some centuries in this basest form of merchandise. Its most infamous record relates to the systematic sale of English children in Ireland; this was finally checked by the declaration of a synod which met at Armagh in 1171, and declared

¹ Stubbs, *Constitutional History*.

all English Christian slaves free. Giraldus, who, after being archdeacon of St. David's, administered that see for some years, made a tour of Ireland with Prince John, and afterwards read an account of it publicly in the University of Oxford; he speaks in strong words of the sale of slaves in that island, and narrates the decision of the synod. There were many kidnapped Englishmen in Ireland as late as the reign of Henry II. The port of Bristol, which sent forth Cabot, had also long a slave trade. Bishop Wufstan of Worcester came to the city from year to year, and preached every Sunday, sometimes for two months together, against this iniquity till it was suppressed. William the Conqueror had forbidden the trade, but it survived his prohibition. Ethelred and Canute had before him forbidden the sale of men to heathen masters—a limitation which also showed the tardiness of the times.

The nobler impulses of the church appear in many an act of humanity seen in this narrower sphere. Thus, Theodore, one of the greatest of the primates, denied Christian burial to the kidnapper, and forbade the sale of children by their parents after seven—an unexplained and unsatisfactory limit. Ecgberht of York went further and punished any sale of child or kinsfolk with excommunication. Bishop Wilfred, when an estate with two hundred and fifty Christian slaves was left to him, set them all free.

King Alfred initiated the Hebrew usage, and introduced a law that a Christian bondman could only be held seven years. 'And for me,' he says in one clause of his will, 'the West Saxon nobles have

pronounced as lawful that I may leave them free or bond, whether I will. But I, for God's love and my soul's health, will that they be masters of their freedom and of their will.' His personal dependents, as well as the actual thralls in his service, were to enjoy full liberty to go over to another master and to another estate at their own pleasure. The thrall's first step towards freedom seems to have been this leave to choose his master. Yet, after the Norman Conquest, numbers of men sold themselves into slavery.

The *History of Orosius* which Alfred translated into Anglo-Saxon belonged to the age of Augustine and *The City of God*. Orosius answers the Romans who complain, after the invasion of the Goths, that they are worse off with Christianity than they were without it. Here is a passage that the King translates for the benefit of his Saxon subjects :—

'How blindly many people speak about Christianity : that it is worse now than it was before, and will not or cannot call to mind where it happened before Christianity, that any nation voluntarily sued for peace, without having need of it, or where any nation could obtain peace from another, either with gold or with silver, or with any money, without being subjected to it. But since Christ was born, who is the peace and love of all the earth, not only might men redeem themselves from thralldom with money, but nations also were at peace with each other, without slavery.'

CHAPTER VIII

ENTER THE NEGRO

THE Tower of Belum, which the traveller passes as he enters the Tagus, marks the spot from which Vasco da Gama embarked to discover a southern passage to India. The Church of Sao Jeronymo near by was built with the first gold brought from the East ; in the smaller church, that stood first on that site, he had spent in prayer the night before he sailed ; and here now repose his ashes. No one can ascend the hill above Cintra, or look seaward from the tower of Pena Castle, whence King Manuel searched the horizon for the voyager's return, without perceiving how inevitable was the part which Portugal has had in maritime discovery, for Lisbon may be said to be the Land's End of Europe.

It is easy to understand the spirit which prompted Prince Henry of Portugal to make his abode at Sagres, the southernmost promontory, from which every white sail was visible. There he remained for twelve years, and the story does not seem improbable which represents him as coming one morning to a sudden resolve to despatch two gentlemen of his household,

each with a vessel to explore the coast of Barbary. It was the first of several expeditions which he directed, one result of which was the discovery of Madeira, but more important was the knowledge won of the African coast. When other duties called him from Sagres, he continued to push forward the exploration. Within twenty years of the prince's death, the King of Portugal was enabled to take the title of 'the Lord of Guinea.'

But the most momentous incident of this period was the introduction of the negro into Portugal. He came as a slave, and his coming made a new era in the history of slavery. In 1441 one of the vessels sent out by Prince Henry captured and brought home some Azeneghi Moors, and these the next year offered to give, if sent back, some black slaves in ransom. They sent ten, with gold dust and other gifts; and these are supposed, from the wonderment they created, to have been the first negroes seen in the Peninsula. Two years later, we hear of a company at Lagos making an expedition and bringing home two hundred slaves. A contemporary chronicler has given an account, as an eye-witness, of the landing and distribution of these one August morning, early, by reason of the heat. We quote a few sentences, for here we have the first description of scenes such as were to be a thousand times repeated to the shame of centuries following:—

'But what heart was that, how hard soever, which was not pierced with sorrow, seeing that company, for some had sunken cheeks and their faces bathed in

tears, looking at each other ; others were groaning very dolorously, looking at the heights of the heavens, fixing their eyes upon them as if they were asking succour from the Father of nature ; and others struck their faces with their hands, throwing themselves on the earth ; others made their lamentations in songs, according to the customs of their country, which, although we could not understand their language, we saw corresponded well to the height of their sorrow.’¹ And he proceeds to tell how families were broken up and dispersed by lot.

The negro had become only too familiar a personage in Spain when Columbus sailed for the West. There is no evidence that he entered only through Portugal. There is a letter from Ferdinand and Isabella in 1474, nominating a well-known negro of ‘noble lineage’ ‘Mayoral of the negroes’ for Seville, ‘for the many good, loyal and signal services which you have done us, and do each day, and because we know your sufficiency, ability and good disposition’—and defining his duties, for in that city negroes then abounded, and their privileges were thus protected.

The year 1492 will be remembered, when many other dates are forgotten, for it was the year which brought Europe and America into knowledge of each other’s existence. The story of Columbus does not belong to this narrative, except as it is associated with the revival of slavery.

¹ The whole narrative is given by Helps, to whose full history of the *Spanish Conquest of America* and its Relation to the History of Slavery (4 vols.) we are indebted for many facts relating to the commencement of the slave trade.

CHAPTER IX

AN IDYLL OF PERU

IT was the suggestion of Carlyle to one who had lost himself in dreams and questions, that the secret of a healthful life lay in each man's setting himself to till his own little plot. Europe, for three-fourths of its history, could not achieve more than that—nay, did not achieve so much ; its plot was small as compared with the world unknown to Rome. There were civilisations existent in America before Columbus ; whence they came is still a question. It is difficult for us even now to conceive of a land where all real property belonged to the ruler alone, and where gold and silver were used only for the decorations of the gods and kings. It was so in the days of the Incas, before the Spanish conquest of Peru.

‘A state which had no money and practically no property had also nothing wherewith to pay taxes. But the citizen himself was the property, the slave of the state, and consequently he owed a certain portion of his labour to the state.’¹

The *Republic* of Plato, the *Politics* of Aristotle, and

¹ *History of the World—America*, by Dr. H. F. Helmset.

most of our modern thinkers, appear but dull and dusty when we place them in the light of this dreamland, where all men were 'slaves.'

'Agriculture was the foundation of the Inca kingdom; it was regarded as divine service, and every subject of the kingdom was entrusted with its accomplishment. When the season for tilling the soil had come round, the Inca himself, followed by all his court, proceeded in great pomp to a field that was dedicated to the sun, in the neighbourhood of Cuzco, and began the agriculture in person, with religious ceremonies. Each of his followers had to follow his example. The order was then transmitted by officials through the country that the subjects should begin the year's work upon the land. The head of every family was in annual possession of a particular plot of land proportioned to the needs of his household; if his family increased so did his plot, a piece half the size of the original allotment being given him for each son, and a quarter of the original size for each daughter. But the land remained state property, and upon the death or migration of the occupant, it reverted to the Crown.'

The fiery Alexander—the Great, we call him—regarded the nobility of his time as his household servants, and the property of his subjects as his own; but how remote from his oriental ideas is this idyll of the transatlantic West.

CHAPTER X

LAS CASAS

LAS CASAS shows among the adventurous leaders of this stirring time as one of its noblest spirits. The Old World had 'supped full of horrors'; the New World awakes to quaff them. The dark places of the mysterious West, as they uncover, are seen to be as full of cruelty as the sun-scorched East. When the two civilisations meet, it is a recoil into barbarism, deluges of blood filling the deeper depths that open. Las Casas passes to and fro as a preacher of righteousness and mercy, with practical aims that are far in advance. Sixteen times he crossed the Atlantic.

During the ages of confusion, Christianity spread and grew to power. The universality of its gospel was in contrast to the strife of nations. The unity of imperial power was broken, another ideal was dimly seen in the dream of a unity of faith; and in time, by means of a democratic claim, it created a priestly caste that essayed to rule over kings and nobles. The superstitions and corruptions and pagan intrusions which overlaid the simplicity of primitive times had not left the mediæval church without a witness. Rites

might be degraded to the nature of a charm, but there remained a faith which had dividing and renewing powers.

A time was at hand which was to prove as desolating and disintegrating in the spiritual world as the barbarian invasions had been to the Roman empire, and to add another chapter of infamies to man's troubled history. Meanwhile, with the first widening of the horizon, the missionary zeal of the church awoke. It was not wholly ambition ; there were men eager for the salvation of the unknown races—men in whose hearts a large philanthropy had unconscious place. Such a one was Las Casas.

The war cry of Islam was religion, and the vision of Paradise was an inspiration to its warriors who fell. It was another vision, dark and terrible, to which Christendom turned. A frightful tyranny had grown up, unsuspected, in its midst. The Keys of the Future Life, as they were held to be, were degraded into instruments of torture, and their authority shamelessly abused even for purposes of vulgar extortion. Baptism had ceased to be a symbol ; the mystic rite was construed to hold the secret of man's eternal fate ; with it was salvation—without it there lay in wait all the terrors that a Dante could depict ; and the priest administered the creed. Even in the ages of cruelty—ages hardened by familiarity with every kind of horror—there are traces of a true pity for the doomed of men. But bigotry grew to be a holy passion—fanaticism was the voice of faith, and to persecute, a sacred privilege.

While Columbus was thinking of the Indies, Torquemada was lighting his fires. There could be no understanding of freedom—no real liberty of man—where the Inquisition ruled ; there might be death or a bondage which was worse.

The year in which Columbus made his great discovery witnessed the expulsion of the Jews from Spain. One body of eighty thousand streamed into Portugal on their way to Africa. A crowd of fugitives, in sore extremity on the Barbary coast, consented to be baptized in hope of being allowed to return, and the water of baptism was sprinkled upon them from a brush as they thronged. ‘Thus,’ says a Castilian historian, ‘the calamities of these poor blind creatures proved in the end an excellent remedy, that God made use of to unseal their eyes.’ When, a few years later, Ximenes sought to bring the Moors of Granada to submission, fifty thousand surrendered to baptism ; and there were Spaniards who argued then, and when the turn of the Moors came for final expulsion, that baptism, in the heaven it gave, was far more than compensation for exile.¹

A deeper feeling seems to have mingled with the advices that were given to Columbus and his companions. But as Columbus carried with him the traditions of Europe in relation to slavery, so the churchmen who went forth were not beyond asserting the claims and repeating the mistakes of the church they left behind. Many thousands of Indians were of course baptized, and so recklessly that an inquiry was

¹ Robertson’s *Charles V.*

afterwards instituted ; but there were far-seeing men among the Spaniards who found more difficult duties before them. Las Casas was one of the twelve ecclesiastics chosen to follow Columbus on his return. He was son of a Spaniard who had shared the first voyage, and but twenty-eight when he began his work, under the second governor of the Indies.

Meanwhile the Pope, Alexander the Sixth, had issued a bull by which he confirmed the Spanish monarchs 'in the possession of all lands discovered, or hereafter to be discovered, in the western ocean,'—an endowment afterwards qualified by a line of latitude in favour of Portugal, to whom was also granted the right of possession of territories she might acquire on the African coast between Europe and India. These were temporalities with a vengeance, and nothing could more clearly show the power to which the church had attained and aspired ; even Las Casas rested the Spanish claim to South America on the Pope's charter. But they were not so monstrously different from the grants which English kings and queens gave to court favourites, of far-stretching lands on the North American coast. It is more to our point to remember the letter addressed by Pope Paul III., forty-four years later, to the Primate of Spain, in which he excommunicates all who should reduce the Indians to slavery, or deprive them of their goods. The words of Leo X., when the Dominicans of South America appealed to him, were a general affirmation that 'not only the Christian religion, but nature herself, cried out against a state of slavery.'

The new found islands of the West were no 'knots

of Paradise,' no 'summer isles of Eden lying in dark purple spheres of sea'; the ills that flesh is heir to crowded there, with ills of spirit. The natives, whom their discoverers knew from the first as Indians, had long feared the cannibal Caribs; the coming of the Spaniards was like the falling of a blight upon them. Both Ferdinand and Isabella were solicitous for the welfare of their distant subjects, whose conversion to the Holy Catholic Faith they had declared to be a first object. They had sent out instructions that 'all the Indians in Hispaniola' (the name given to Hayti on the first settlement) 'should be free from servitude, and not be molested by anyone, and that they should live as free vassals, governed and protected by justice, as were the vassals of Castile.' The system in the end established swept this dream away, for it distributed the Indians amongst the Spaniards, binding them on fixed conditions to till the land, and do other labour, and it was represented to their Majesties that this dispersal amongst Christians would facilitate conversion.

Columbus regarded Indians taken in war as slaves, and held that slavery was the just doom of the cannibal tribes. He, at an early period, recommended an exchange of slaves for commodities required by the colony. A number of Indian captives were advertised for sale in the markets of Andalusia, but the Queen commanded the sale to be suppressed till a council of theologians and doctors had given judgment respecting it. A cacique, who had failed to perform the personal services imposed upon him, fled to the forests and was pursued, a large number of his people being captured. Columbus

despatched them as slaves to Spain—five ships with six hundred of them, of whom two hundred were given to the masters of the vessels in payment of the freight. The anger of Isabella flamed forth when she heard of it, and she issued a proclamation that all persons who were in possession of Indians given them by the admiral should send them back to Hispaniola under pain of death, while those left in the possession of the crown should also be restored to freedom. It would have been a strange perversion of events if these Indians had entered to fill on Spanish soil the place that Jew and Moor were to vacate.

The gravest dangers came with the discovery of gold. Labourers were wanted for the mines, but they fell mysteriously away. Famine and disease carried off numbers, and thousands also perished under the conditions of a work for which they were not fitted. The excessive fatigue of long journeyings, scantiness of food, and all insanitary causes,—sometimes even the corruption of dead bodies that lay unburied,—combined to weaken and destroy. Forty thousand were brought in five years from the Lucayan Islands, to make good the deficiency in Hispaniola ; some lived on, we are told, in patient despair, some refused sustenance, and others escaped to caves and unfrequented places. In a letter from the king, relating to Trinidad, there is a warning word—‘Look well if there is gold there, for you know what the Indians suffer in changing them from one place to another.’ A story is told of a Cuban cacique which has significance, even if it be the invention of a Dominican satirist,—that he called his people together,

and told them he would show them the lord the Spaniards served. Accordingly he produced a small basket filled with gold. 'Here is the lord whom they serve, and after whom they go, and, as you have heard, already they are longing to pass over to this place, not pretending more than to seek this lord; wherefore let us make to him here a festival and dances, so that when they come, he may tell them to do us no harm.'¹ The Indians danced round the gold till they were exhausted, and then threw it into the river.

So grave were the circumstances that a council was held in Spain to devise regulations. After ingenious argument as to the moral value of servitude, it was decided that the Indians appointed to work at the mines were to stay there five months, then they were to have forty days for holidays, in which time, however, they were to till their own lands, then they were to go to the mines for another five months. They were to eat sardines on fast days!

A group of twelve or fifteen Dominican monks had settled in Hispaniola. They were moved by the cruelties of which they heard, and the most eloquent of their number startled the Spaniards of San Domingo by preaching a sermon, in which he declared that they were living in 'mortal sin' by reason of their tyranny to the Indians. These were the men who appealed to Spain.

The indignation of Las Casas was awakened by many acts of atrocity which he himself witnessed. He was in Cuba during the time of its 'pacification,' and

¹ Helps's *Spanish Conquest of America*.

had settled there with a friend on a farm, which was cultivated under the usual system of Indians in *repartimiento*. Some verses in Ecclesiasticus enchained his attention (chapter xxxiv. 18-22):—

‘He that sacrificeth of a thing, wrongfully gotten, his offering is ridiculous; and the gifts of unjust men are not accepted . . .

‘He that taketh away his neighbour’s living slayeth him; and he that defraudeth the labourer of his hire is a blood shedder.’

He went to the governor and surprised him by announcing his determination to have no more Indians. He also publicly avowed his change of view. Then he bethought him of appealing in person to the King of Spain against the system. His friend was absent in Jamaica; on his return, the two took counsel, the farm was sold, and the money devoted with the full sympathy of both to the expenses of the projected journey. The state of things at this time is shown by the fact that the Spaniards, now a mixed body of reckless adventurers, had trained bloodhounds to pursue fugitives, and that families and villages of Indians committed suicide to escape their severities.¹ Las Casas went, but Ferdinand was now old and ailing, and almost the first thing Las Casas heard on reaching Seville, was that the king was dead. The venerated Cardinal Ximenes took up the matter, gave him welcome and encouragement, and selected three Hieronomite monks to accompany him back on a mission of reform. They were instructed to form settlements for the

¹ See Helps’s *Spanish Conquest of America*.

Indians, who were to be 'treated as Christians and freemen.'

There is no science in the statistics of earlier times, and wherever we read, we are reminded both of the value and deceptiveness of round numbers. Las Casas gives the population of Hispaniola on its discovery as 3,000,000; a more critical authority reduces it to 1,130,000. In 1508, fifteen years later, when a new 'treasurer' was sent out, there were reported to be 70,000 Indians; when Don Diego Columbus, the son of Christopher, became governor, there were but 40,000. A later official, despatched to make a new division of the Indians, found only thirteen or fourteen thousand left. No pleas or mistaken reckonings can disguise this calamity of loss. It was the record of a single island, but death had wider fields to reap.

Las Casas had now been named 'Protector of the Indians.' It was not long before he took alarm at the action of the Hieronomite fathers, and he returned to Spain to take further counsel. The new king, soon to be the Emperor Charles V., had come southward from Flanders to make acquaintance with his kingdom. Las Casas met the Council of the Indies; the court preachers were on his side. 'Whoever heard,' asked one of these, quaintly pleading for more than a life of servitude at the mines, 'of a great digging republic, in which there are no soldiers, philosophers, lawyers, official men, or other kind of men than those who dig?' The new Bishop of Darien, who chanced also to be at home, ventured the assertion that the Indians were 'by

nature slaves.' As this was the first time the Greek idea had an expositor from the western world, the firm answer of Las Casas may be recorded: 'Plato was a Gentile and is now burning in hell, and we are only to make use of his doctrine as far as it is consistent with our holy faith and Christian customs.' Gradually Las Casas passes from the humanitarian view to questions of practical bearing. He proposed to send out labourers from the mother-country, and gathering the people in the churches as he passed through Castile, persuaded many to go. Moreover, to further his general aims, he obtained from the king a grant of land on the Pearl coast of the mainland, where slave raids were already frequent. There he proposed to settle with husbandmen, labourers, and ecclesiastics—not a soldier or a sailor was to have a place there. His own suggestion, that each Spanish resident should be allowed to have eight negroes in his service, afterwards gave him bitter pain, for he lived to see that a negro had all the rights of an Indian, and was wronged in precisely the same way when captured as those whom he sought to befriend. The negro had long before been carried across the Atlantic; but his value was seen in a different light as the number of Indians dwindled. Now the Spanish India House itself proposed to send a thousand blacks to each of the four islands, Hispaniola, Porto Rico, Cuba, and Jamaica. It must be specially noted, not as an isolated transaction, but as evidence of an established usage which derogates from the fame of Doria's city, that a monopoly of supply was sold to Genoese merchants for eight years for 25,000 ducats.

The restless spirit of Las Casas could not achieve all that he desired. Hispaniola was but the stepping stone to a wide world of evils. Far greater complications hindered the settlement of the countries on the mainland. His own scheme of colonisation on the coast failed. During his absence, the natives on the Pearl coast, to avenge a slave raid, fell upon two Dominican missionaries, whom he had left behind, and murdered them. The Spaniards from the islands revenged their death with the wholesale slaughter and capture of Indians. Again the natives retaliated, and not a Spaniard was left. When Las Casas returned, he found the Indians sullen and the place a desolation. Condemned by all alike, he withdrew to a Dominican monastery. There, for eight years, he remained in seclusion. Passing over to Guatemala when at length he emerged, he took up his abode in a forsaken monastery with a few friends. Then we hear of him doing wonders by peaceably reducing to amity one of the most warlike tribes. Afterwards he went on other missions. His influence was again conspicuously seen in some new laws. The first was so constructed as to bar any hereditary claim to personal services rendered on an estate; another forbade in absolute terms that any Indian should be made a slave. Other restrictions pressed heavily upon the official classes, and so great was the difficulty of applying the laws, so violent the opposition, that in a few years they were withdrawn.

Despite the prohibition, Indian slaves multiplied even in San Domingo, and it remained for a later emperor again to interfere. Las Casas offended the

planters by refusing the sacraments to those who broke the law. All the wealth of Peru could not ensure its good government. They offered him the bishopric of Cusco, its capital, one of the marvellous cities of the world; he refused it, and took instead Chiapa, an undeveloped region. The difficulties of the time were increased by a fanatical cry for the conversion of the West.

Las Casas had passed the three score and ten when he returned to Spain for the last time, but his rare energy abated nothing in the cause of the oppressed. His last treatise, written at ninety, was a protest against the excessive taxation of the Indians in Peru, supported by irresistible facts. His very last act was an application to the king in council to restore a needed court of appeal in Guatemala. To that end he left his monastery at Valladolid, and went to Madrid, where he died at the age of ninety-two.

It is indication of the tentative feeling of even those earliest times that Cortes on his death enjoined his son to take steps to ascertain 'whether slaves could be held with a good conscience or no.'

CHAPTER XI

BARBAROSSA AND THE CORSAIRS

THERE are times when the story of man seems little more than the conflict of brute forces, as unabashed as the combats of the Coliseum. The 'first and great commandment' and the 'second, which is like unto it,' are, at such periods, as remote from human practice as heaven from hell. The disguises of later civilisation are absent; the strong hand grasps, the strong arm smites. There are no rights of man in view; though the law of righteousness is unseen behind, distinguishing and determining many things. Thus, for centuries, the Mediterranean swarmed with pirates; they raided towns along the Italian coast; the ships of Genoa were never safe, and the slave trade flourished. It is startling to find Mohammedans enslaved in mediæval Florence. The same lawless spirit showed in mid-Europe. Private wars were tolerated under the feudal system. Reprisals were the common practice. In vain Charlemagne had sought to check these evils. In vain for long the church raised its voice of Christian protest and authority. German barons not a few issued from their castles and plundered; no traveller was

safe, ransom was revenue, but he might be enslaved. The numerous highwaymen and banditti of later times were in comparison like children's toy soldiers to an armed troop. The seizure and imprisonment of Luther in the Wartburg was an occurrence like many another that has been forgotten.

Luther was still living when Charles V. led his expedition to Tunis against the corsair Barbarossa; no incident so vividly reveals the slave power which had established itself in North Africa. Two sons of a Lesbian potter forsook their native isle and joined a crew of pirates. Soon, by their energy, they obtained a ship of their own, and so distinguished themselves as in time to collect a fleet of twelve galleys, besides many smaller vessels. They called themselves the friends of the sea and the enemies of all who sail upon it.¹

The elder brother, Horuc, called Barbarossa from his red beard, was invited by the King of Algiers to assist in the capture of a Spanish port; he went, secretly murdered the king, and himself took possession of the throne, acquiring also adjacent territories. When he fell in a desperate fray, his brother Haygradin, known also as Barbarossa, assumed his place, attracting by the fame of his exploits the attention of the Sultan Solyman, who offered him command of the Turkish fleet. He went to Constantinople, allured thither one of the princes of Tunis, and planned by treachery to make himself master of that kingdom also. Returning with a fleet of two hundred and fifty vessels, he spread

¹ See Robertson's *Charles V.*

terror along the coasts of Italy, and seized Tunis with ease.

Charles V. came to the aid of the exiled king ; his expedition was like another crusade. From point to point the emperor pressed forward ; ten thousand Christian slaves lay imprisoned in the citadel of Tunis, whose lives Barbarossa had been persuaded to spare. At the critical moment, when the army of defence advanced from the town, these slaves burst out, and overpowered the Turkish garrison. The imperial army took possession with terrible slaughter. As the emperor entered, the captives, among them being several persons of distinction, fell on their knees and blessed him as their deliverer. When Charles concluded his treaty with the restored king, one provision required that all the Christian slaves within his dominions, of whatever nation, should be set at liberty without ransom, and that no subject of the emperor's should, for the future, be detained in servitude. There were two limitations here—that the slave released was Christian, and the emperor's subject ; freedom was not given to man as man. But at this, the most resplendent moment of his history, Charles V. sent home twenty thousand slaves, whom he had freed by arms or by treaty, clothed, and supplied with the means of returning to their respective countries.

Rome was sacked during the reign of this same monarch, who put on mourning when he heard the news, and it was for days subjected by Spaniards and Germans to pillage, violence and torture, unparalleled in the most calamitous times. It is impossible, in the

confusion of successive wars, to measure the social changes. The murderer does not feel the pulse of his victim, and the powers that throttle nations stifle their cries.

When Solyman, the Magnificent, advanced from Constantinople into Hungary, he carried back 200,000 prisoners ; but who can say how they were distributed, or how many perished ? We come continually, and to a late period, upon the traces of enslavement ; but as customs changed at last it ceased ; was it all gain ? Gibbon states that ‘the custom of enslaving prisoners of war was totally extinguished in the thirteenth century by the prevailing influence of Christianity.’ But we find many instances at later dates in which the right supposed to be given by war is at least recognised.

Sismondi makes a remark of grave significance : ‘While the world boasted a continual progress in civilisation—while philosophy and justice had better defined the rights of man—while arts, literature, and poetry had quickened the feelings and rendered men susceptible to painful impressions, war was made with a ferocity at which men in an age of the darkest barbarism would have blushed. The massacre of all the inhabitants of a town taken by assault, the execution of whole garrisons which had surrendered at discretion, the giving up of prisoners to the conquering soldiers in order to be tortured into the confessions of hidden treasure, became the common practice of war in the armies of Louis XII., Ferdinand and Maximilian.’¹

The comparison is doubtful. When we look back,

¹ *Italian Republics.*

the worst that theologians have said of man seems written across history. No philosophic Pindar could exhaust the wonder and glory of human life, or recapitulate all its deeds of greatness. But what are they who gather children on the threshing-floor that they may be trodden to death by oxen? who throw women to wild beasts, and burn saints at the stake? Who are these that through the centuries slay or enslave without pity? that, in cold blood, can order secret assassinations by the hundred, or give to death twenty thousand, fifty thousand, or a hundred thousand, without a quiver? Where in history hides the impulse of humanity? and when does it speak but in the voice of the Son of Man?

‘Our system of ethics,’ says Bancroft, in referring to the deadly nature and long continuance of the slave trade, ‘will not explain the phenomenon; its cause is not to be sought in the suppression of moral feeling, but rather in the condition of a branch of the human family not yet wholly possessed of its moral and rational life.’ The world might have despaired but for the inspiration of the ‘new life,’ the rebirth which Christianity preaches, overpassing ecclesiastical limits.

‘There is nothing that I would not do for the afflicted,’ said La Rochefoucauld, reflecting one of the moods of the Hôtel de Rambouillet, ‘but pity is a passion which is good for nothing in a well-made soul.’

CHAPTER XII

MOHAMMED AND THE EAST

IN no land has the slave been so clothed with romance or exalted to such power as in Mohammedan India.

The earliest of geographers, Strabo, whose travels coincide with the beginning of the Christian era, mentions Onesicritus, who accompanied Alexander on his oriental expeditions, as affirming that in one part of India he had found no slaves, that the young rendered the services elsewhere left to serfs, that the absence of slavery was an excellent thing, and the whole region well ordered.¹

Herodotus had described Egyptian life as divided into seven classes, and Strabo wrote of seven tribes or castes as existing in India. When the Portuguese approached it from the south, they found a subdivision of labour with intricate regulations that perplexed them. When the 'Laws of Menu,' which carry back tradition 900 years before Christ, came to the knowledge of Europe, it was seen that India, like other lands, had had its sacerdotal, military, and mercantile classes, and that the Sudras were its servile

¹ Newman's *Aristotle*.

class, believed to spring from the foot of Brahma; that they were not slaves, but could not accumulate property, and were bound to submissiveness by severe penalties. Besides these, there were in large numbers the Pariahs, supposed to be, like the Helots of Sparta, originally the relics of a conquered race. It was the Portuguese who introduced the word 'caste,' indicating a difference of race as defining the innumerable divisions which puzzled them. Servitude existed under other forms than they had known; and the subjection of women involved degradation and suffering even more terrible than the inflictions of slavery.

Rhys Davids, who is a chief authority on 'Buddhist India,' says of the centuries before Christ that the basis of the social distinctions was relationship, or as the Aryans, proud of their lighter colour, put it, colour; and that the Aryan world was divided into four social grades, called colours. There were slaves, and emancipation is often referred to, but for the most part they were 'household servants, and not badly treated, and their numbers seem to have been insignificant.' Arrian quotes a statement from Megasthenes, a Greek historian (B.C. 300), whose history has perished, to the effect that 'all the Indians are free, and not one of them is a slave,' on which Rhys Davids remarks that 'the distinct and unanimous testimony of all the Indian evidence is decisive that the status of slavery was then an actual factor of Indian life,' though not of the kind that would strike a stranger accustomed to Greece.¹ When later the great Asoka (about B.C. 260) made

¹ Rhys Davids, *Buddhist India*, pp. 53, 263.

his dynasty famous, ruling from the district now known as Oude,—‘the Constantine, the Theodosius, the Charlemagne of Buddhism,’ as Reynolds calls him,—whose name is honoured from Mongolia to Ceylon, he inscribed his edicts on rock pillars, some of which are still existent. On one of these is enjoined the duty of ‘right conduct towards slaves and servants.’

As Buddhism spread northward it must at every step have encountered the rule of slavery. The subordination of the personal in its creed is in singular contrast to the value set on the individual in Christianity, and yet there is a correspondence in the place its ideals give to practical charity.

As we look across Asia—so vast a region with so vast a past—we see the strength of man putting on inhuman guises, and lose the social sense in a tornado of wars. The world of science takes infinite pains to understand in minute things the struggle by which nature advances the fittest, but can throw little light on the conflicts of the human race which rend a continent.

Just when the ‘Christianisation’ of Europe was deemed to be externally complete, another religion was springing to life in Arabia. The Angles might have been still waiting for purchasers in the slave-market of Rome when Mohammed, at Mecca, made his first converts among the slaves. From that class came some of the first to suffer persecution for Islam. He had the Jewish law behind him ; there were also knots

of Christians in Arabia ; and in his teaching there is no trace of any new ideas as to personal liberty. His own relationships go far to explain the measure of consideration he gave to slaves. It was his custom to free his own. In his last pilgrimage, when the words he spoke, after solemn ceremonies and in the presence of vast crowds, were supposed to be his farewell, he said : ‘ And your slaves ! see that ye feed them with such food as ye eat yourselves ; and clothe them with the stuff ye wear. And if they commit a fault which ye are not inclined to forgive, then sell them, for they are the servants of the Lord, and are not to be tormented.’

In the Koran are these words : ‘ Unto such of your slaves as desire a written instrument allowing them to redeem themselves on paying a certain sum, write one if ye know good in them, and give them of the riches of God, which He hath given you.’ And there is this more general declaration : ‘ What shall make them to understand what the highway of good is ? It is to free captives, or to feed in the day of famine the orphan who is of kin, or the poor man who lieth on the ground. Whoso doeth this, and is one of those who believe and recommend perseverance unto each other, and recommend mercy unto each other, these shall be companions of the right hand.’

His followers could be merciless towards captives ; and his own permission to take captive slave-women into the harem fastened upon the whole East a domestic slavery which is still one of its heaviest curses. Even as we write come facts which prove that

still under Turkish rule, and in Armenia, women are sold into this bondage—alas, not so unlike what may be found in the capitals of western nations, where ‘white slaves’ minister to reckless vice.

It has been said that on becoming a Moslem a man became free, but there are facts which indicate that freedom was not so easily conferred. As every Crusader, on returning, became a free man, so probably did every fighting Moslem. Nothing, it is true, could be more explicit than Mohammed’s own assertion of the equality of believers. ‘Ye are one brotherhood,’ he said in his farewell; and ‘he placed’ says Muir, ‘the forefinger of one hand as an emblem of evenness on the forefinger of the other.’ The downtrodden slaves of Spain were among the first to give allegiance to the Moors.¹ In North Africa, multitudes of the conquered were given freedom. Large bodies of slaves elsewhere accepted Islam in new hope. Yet it would sometimes seem that a Christian slave becoming a Moslem did not thereby obtain his freedom, excepting as his master gave it. In many instances the rights which make liberty precious were withheld.

How complete was the equality in the Arab nation was curiously shown in the first days, when the spoil of conquered provinces was divided, and every one of the Arab race received an assessment—even Arab slaves, so long as any of the blood remained in slavery.² In Turkey the slaves had certain rights; the condition of the Christian captives varied, the galley-slaves suffering most. Enormous numbers of slaves were taken in wars

¹ Arnold’s *Preaching of Islam*.

² Muir’s *The Caliphate*.

outside Islam. Thus the Moslem's privilege of freedom, if exercised as an exclusive right, blinded a large part of the world to that greater conception of universal claim which was embodied in Christianity, and which, with desperate effort, has struggled gradually towards sovereignty. The natural result is seen in the Mohammedan slave raiders of Africa.

Of the domestic slavery so prevalent in Mohammedan countries, Sir William Muir remarks that 'however much ameliorated by the kindly influences which in Moslem lands surround it, still the licence of servile concubinage fixes its withering grasp with more damaging effect on the owner of the slave than on the slave herself.'

'Mohammedan law,' says one who has watched its operations, writing at a later period, Lieutenant Smith, who served in the East Coast squadron, and was afterwards Vice-Consul at Zanzibar, 'permits slavery, and regulates it. I am not aware that it enjoins it. To a Mohammedan the institution seems natural and necessary.'¹ In India its action is modified by British rule.

When the Turks first emerged from their native steppes, it was a slave king who gathered the Afghan tribes under the Moslem banner; and it was his son who burst upon India as the first of the idol-breakers, and overran the plains from the Indus to the Ganges. It was he who sacked Somnath and scattered its multitudes of pilgrims. 'Whatever may be said against the slave system,' says Stanley Lane Poole,² the student of

¹ See paper in the *History of the Universities' Mission*.

² *Mediæval India*. By Stanley Lane Poole.



'MASTER OF THE WORLD,' CRIED THE SLAVE, 'FOR WHOSE SAKE HAVE
YOU BOUGHT THESE OTHER SERVANTS?'

these times, 'in the East it tends to the production of great men.' The hereditary heir proves as frequently as not a failure; the slave who attains to power holds his place by reason of his natural gifts. Thus Delhi had its slave kings who ranked with its greatest. Aybek, the first of them, won great battles, destroyed temples, built mosques, ruled successfully, and gathered spoil and immense numbers of slaves from his wars. Altamash, who succeeded him, had been his slave; he breasted the fierce Mongol invasions. A little later came Balban, who had been kidnapped as a child and brought to India, where he was purchased by Altamash.

'The story runs that the sultan refused at first to buy him, because of his shortness and ugliness.

"Master of the world," cried the slave, "for whose sake have you bought these other servants?"

"For mine own," said Altamash, laughing.

"Then buy me for the sake of God," cried Balban.

"So be it," said the sultan, and the ugly slave was set among the water-bearers.'¹ He rose and lived to rule for forty years, half as minister and half as king.

All the extremes of which man is capable mingle in wild orgie with oriental extravagance of splendour and horror throughout these times. We read of the slave markets being glutted, of slaves sold for a few shillings; but where shall we find a picture of slavery like this under the Shah Firoz?

'The slaves were well educated at court, and trained either for the army, for palace employment, or for mechanical trades. There were 40,000 of them on

¹ *Mediæval India.* By Stanley Lane Poole.

guard at the palace, and 12,000 artisans in Delhi, and altogether not less than 180,000 slaves were supported by the government. They had a department of their own, with a treasury, muster-master, and district officials. When the sultan went abroad, he was escorted by thousands of these slaves—archers, swordsmen, halberdiers, and packmen, mounted on buffaloes. Never before had slaves been so largely employed, though Alu-ad-din had mustered over 50,000.¹

At the time that Englishmen were framing the Magna Charta, Genghis Khan was writing the most awful chapter of Asian history. The Mongol invasion swept westward with resistless force, and millions perished. A hundred and fifty years later, contemporary with the peaceful work of Wyclif, the lame Timur came southward with a sword as relentless. As he approached Delhi, he put to death his prisoners, fearing they might encumber his movements—a hundred thousand, the tradition runs. All the world knows how these men could slay; but this, ‘at one fell swoop’—is it possible? It is significant of the new influences moving among men, that, in the interval between these two fierce conquerors, when Christendom trembled, an embassy was despatched to the grandson of Genghis Khan to invite him to embrace the Christian faith, and cease these desolations. It consisted of Franciscan monks, who made their way across Poland and Russia to the confines of Thibet; and of Dominicans, who passed through Syria, northward into Persia. They retired unsuccessful, but unharmed.

¹ Stanley Lane Poole.

The Sultan of Egypt bought 12,000 slaves from the host of Genghis Khan; they were formed into a body of troops, afterwards famous as the Mamelukes (that word meaning slaves), which became so powerful as to choose one of their number to be sultan. Their story is part of the history of that country. When the Mameluke dynasty was set aside, their beys were made governors of the provinces, and from time to time recruited their number with slaves from the Caucasus. In the end, they were treacherously slain by Mohammed Ali.

The Turkish sultans made the Janissaries a mainstay of their power. They also were a product of war. The force was originally constituted of young Christian prisoners, and it was recruited from captives and became a formidable body of ten thousand. When perfectly organised, such privileges were bestowed that others were attracted to seek admission; but for centuries it was kept young and vigorous by a tax levied upon Christian subjects every four years, when a selection was made from among the children between the ages of six and nine.

CHAPTER XIII

CHINA AND JAPAN

BETWEEN Mohammed and Confucius there is a gulf. Although the old-time spirit is so strong in China, and still may find ferocious expression, slavery has never prevailed there as in the West. The same general causes are seen at work: war and debt may enslave, and bear proportionate fruit. There is no Confucian deliverance on the subject, but the principles of Confucian teaching appear to have exerted an indirect influence hostile to slavery. The actual position is clearly stated by Dr. Williams in his account of *The Middle Kingdom*:—

‘The modern classifications of the people, recognised, however, more by law than custom, are various and comprehensive. First, natives and aliens. . . . Second, conquerors and conquered. . . . Third, free-men and slaves; every native is allowed to purchase slaves, and retain their children in servitude, and free persons sometimes forfeit their freedom on account of their crimes, or mortgage themselves into bondage. Fourth, the honourable and the mean. . . . These four divisions extend over the whole body of the

people, but really affect only a small minority. It is worthy of note how few have been the slaves in China, and how easy has been their condition in comparison with what it was in Greece and Rome. *Owing chiefly to the prevalence of education in the liberal principles of the Four Books, China has been saved from this disintegrating element.* The proportion of slaves to freemen cannot be stated, but the former have never attracted notice by their numbers, nor excited dread by their restiveness. Girls are more readily sold than boys; at Peking a healthy girl under twelve years brings from 30 to 50 taels (5s.), rising to 250 or 300 for one of seventeen to eighteen years old. In times of famine orphans or needy children are exposed for sale at the price of a few cash.’¹

Or again:—‘Another observable result of this republican method of getting the best educated men into office is the absence of any class of slaves or serfs among the population. Slavery exists in a modified form of corporal mortgage for debt, and thousands remain in this serfdom for life through one reason or another. But the destruction of a feudal baronage involved the extinction of its correlative, a villein class, and the oppression of poor debtors, as was the case in Rome under the consuls. Only freemen are eligible to enter the *concours*, but the percentage of slaves is too small to influence the total. To this cause too, may perhaps to a large degree be ascribed the absence of anything like caste, which has had such bad effects in India.’²

¹ Vol. i. p. 412-413.

² Vol. i. page 564.

The first contact of Japan with Europe brought the slave trade to its shores. The long civil wars of the sixteenth century and an expedition to Korea had so impoverished the people that the poorest among them often pawned or sold themselves as slaves to the Spaniards or Portuguese. 'Slaves became so cheap that even the Malay and negro servants of the Portuguese speculated in the bodies of Japanese slaves, who were bought and sold and transported.' In vain decrees were issued which threatened the slave traders with death. Some of the Jesuit bishops and priests strove also against the traffic. Modern Japan, which gave the rights of citizenship to its pariah class, was not slow to denounce the slave trade. While with its revival in the West the negro was for centuries regarded as its chief victim, there were men afloat ready to sweep into the labour markets any subject races or scattered people who might be made to serve. The works of Japanese authors condemn it as a crime in unsparing terms.

In the nineteenth century 'the coolie trade, carried on by the Portuguese at Macao between the local kidnappers and Peru and Cuba, had long existed in defiance of the Chinese Government. Thousands of ignorant Chinese'—we are quoting from *The Mikado's Empire*, by Dr. Griffis, formerly of the Imperial University, Tokio—were yearly decoyed to Macao, and shipped, in sweltering shipholds, under the name of passengers. In Cuba and Peru their contracts were often broken, they were cruelly treated, and only a small proportion of them returned alive to tell their

wrongs. Coolie traders came even to Japan to ship irresponsible hordes of Japanese coolies to the United States. To their everlasting shame, be it said, some were Americans. A few cargoes were sent to Hawaii and California, and natives of Japan were actually sold for contemptible sums to taskmasters. Of those who returned were some of my own students.' In 1872, two fugitive coolies in succession swam from a Peruvian ship to a British man-of-war. The British *chargé d'affaires* called the attention of the Japanese authorities to their case, and they, after protracted inquiry, refused to give them back against their will to the Peruvian claimant, and shipped them to China, to the great satisfaction of the Pekin Government. There was much protesting clamour, and the case was referred for arbitration to the Emperor of Russia, who upheld Japan.

These are incidents that compel us to anticipate the course of our narrative. In the readjustments of labour that followed the abolition of slavery, the coolie was introduced into the western colonies, and he still lingers there. The freed negro could not always be persuaded to work; white labour was impossible under the tropical suns; a grave dilemma arose. Guiana was the first to invite Chinese emigrants; Peru and Cuba followed the example. For awhile all seemed well, but within a dozen years the horrors of the slave trade were found to have been revived, both in the collection of coolies, and in their treatment. A terrible fate befell those who were set to labour in the guano pits of the Cincha Islands. Both British and American skippers protested

against the cruelties they witnessed. 'In 1860 it was calculated that of the 4000 coolies who since the traffic began had been fraudulently consigned to the guano pits of Peru, not one had survived. Some had poisoned themselves with opium; others contrived to be buried alive under falling masses of guano; many jumped off the cliffs and drowned themselves in the sea.'

The British Governor of Hong-Kong was the first to intervene and forbid the trade, and the British Parliament subsequently supported his policy by passing a Chinese Passenger Act. Transferring themselves to the Portuguese settlement of Macao, the labour agents opened depots there, while piratical junks scoured the coasts and brought in kidnapped men. The Canton merchants cried out in indignation. A trial at Hong-Kong as late as 1871 brought into light the circumstances of a mutiny on board a French emigrant ship, in which were three hundred coolies, of whom it was shown one-third were kidnapped and feloniously held in bondage. The representatives of France, England, and China had before this, in 1866, drawn up a convention to regulate the trade; but difficulties arose with the colonies which hindered legalised action. The Indian indentured coolie is under stricter supervision; many precautions are taken; yet he too has had a troubled story, and being distributed by the thousand in many regions, needs the protection of vigilant justice.¹

¹ See *The Encyclopædia Britannica* for details.

CHAPTER XIV

NEGRO RAIDING

WHEN the negro emerges as a slave, the race question for the first time becomes a dividing factor in slavery. Within ten years of the discovery of the West Indies, we hear of negro slaves being allowed there, 'if born in the power of Christians.' A little later King Ferdinand sends out a batch of them—he 'thinks there may be a hundred.' Afterwards we find him writing:—'I do not understand how so many have died; take much care of them.' This perhaps accounts for the holiday of four months which some years later was the rule for the negroes. As the Indians wasted away the negro importations were more numerous and frequent. In 1528 a monopoly of supply for four thousand was granted to certain Germans for Cuba. In 1550 the emperor in council is informed that 'there is scarcely a single native left' in Hispaniola, and that of Indians brought there the greater number had fled. There were then from twenty-five to thirty thousand negroes in the island. A monopoly covering the whole Indies was granted about this time for a large number. All such monopolies were soon to be outpassed. The

islands were to be caught in the whirl of European politics.

Two or three of our greater ships would more than equal the whole tonnage of the merchant navy of Queen Elizabeth ; but they knew then the full measure of English seamanship. The privateers of the Channel were as dangerous as the pirates of the Mediterranean. Indeed, there were pirates mixed with them ; the Scilly Isles were a convenient shelter from which to strike ; the Irish coast favoured them. There were lively times as the feud with Spain threatened war, and when ships in southern harbours might be boarded by the familiars of the Inquisition. The adventurous John Hawkins, who afterwards won fame in the Armada time, whose father had brought home gold and ivory from Guinea, and crossing the Atlantic had brought back the King of Brazil to present to Henry VIII., had heard much of the new western islands, and conceived the idea of himself taking negroes to Hispaniola. He formed a company in London, fitted out three vessels, picked up 300 negroes at Sierra Leone, and carried them (1562) to San Domingo. Two hundred were quickly sold, the remainder were held as a deposit, in case of a dispute about the duty, and, before this point could be settled, an order direct from Spain declared them forfeit.

Nothing disheartened, he planned a second expedition, obtained the approval of Queen Elizabeth, who lent him a large ship, the 'Jesus,' of Lubeck, in which to make the venture, and he sailed accompanied by three small barks. His Order, issued at Farrol, ended with the now familiar sentence : 'Serve God daily,

love one another, preserve your victuals, beware of fire, and keep good company.' A contemporary account of the voyage by a soldier of the expedition abounds in vivid details. They made for Cape Verde. He describes the ships as stopping some days among islands, where one tribe had enslaved another, and 'going every day on shore to take the inhabitants, with burning and spoiling their towns.' He tells how 'the Portugals' led them to a town where there were not above forty men but a hundred women and children—an easy capture—and a quantity of gold; and how they were thwarted and repulsed, getting but ten negroes and losing ten of their best men. Another day they are becalmed: 'But the Almighty God, who never suffereth His elect to perish, sent us the breeze.' This time Hawkins, after crossing the Atlantic, made not for the islands but the mainland; and then beating round soon disposed of his whole cargo. Returning to London, he was welcomed as one might be who had enlarged English commerce and territory. The queen received him. The Spanish ambassador invited him to dinner, but so little approved what he heard that he informed Philip, who remonstrated.¹

Hawkins had to wait a year before he could get away again, but seized the first opportunity as relations with Spain grew less friendly. On the third voyage he sailed for the Rio Grande, found a chief at war, landed and himself helped to secure a town and prisoners, carrying away 400 with him. Again he sold his negroes to Spanish settlers. It was smuggling,

¹ Payne's *Hakluyt's Navigations*.

with men as goods ; before he could get away he came into collision with the Spanish fleet ; and storms and disasters pursued him home. But already an irregular trade had been set going, which was to work havoc for centuries, and be suppressed with difficulty in the reign of Victoria. The wish of Elizabeth that the negroes should go voluntarily, and only those be taken who consented, was disregarded. When she subsequently knighted Hawkins, he took as his crest a kneeling blackamoor.

Leslie Stephen, in commenting on Froude's presentment of the 'English Seamen,' endorses the remark that there never was a time in which the noble was more intimately, more strangely mixed up with the ruffianly and the mean. 'Their heroic enterprise shades off into slave-trading, buccaneering and something scarcely distinguishable from piracy. Their hatred of idolatry blends with a desire for the idolater's silver.'

As the nations put their strength into ships, and scattered their wars on all seas, the Spanish claim to the West Indies could not long remain undisputed. It was soon seen that a blow struck at the new colonial trade might tell as much as a blow struck nearer home. The spoils of richly laden vessels were a bait to adventurous seamen. There was many a hard-fought fight between hostile fleets in those island seas, right down to the time when Napoleon, planning the invasion of England, sought to lure the British fleet out of the Channel, and threw the merchants of London

into consternation by feigning an attack on the West Indies. Beside these conflicts which had national aims, the social conditions were for a long period disturbed by the buccaneers and filibusters who fought each for himself, reinforced by the outlawed of Europe. The trading companies, which were now to win renown, appeared also on the scene, the Dutch and the French appropriated islands. There was a moment when certain Spaniards contrived to hold English settlers as slaves.

One of the most memorable incidents was the expedition despatched by Cromwell, in 1655, when he declared war against Spain,—in the year that followed Milton's sonnet, 'Avenge, O Lord, Thy slaughtered saints,' it is interesting to note, though not as cause and effect,—while Blake was to make the English name 'as well known as was the Roman' in the Mediterranean. Defeated in its attack on San Domingo, it bore down on Jamaica, captured it, and made it an English possession. What would have happened if Cromwell had succeeded, when he tried to persuade his friends of New England to transport themselves and their people to Jamaica, and set up a Puritan reign nearer the centre of things?

Through all these events the negro invasion continued. The negro proved equal to his task; he liked the hot suns, and thrived; and the gold mines were presently forgotten in the spreading plantations of the new tobacco trade, the new sugar cane, and cotton. The islands were but his ante-chamber; he passed to vast estates in Virginia and

Carolina, and along those spreading plains, 'illimitable' prairie, meadow-land and forest, where it had been possible to travel twelve or fourteen days without seeing a human being. A Dutch vessel brought the first cargo of negroes to the mainland, in 1620, landing them on the banks of the James River.

Not less was the negro sought in South America. Carthagena was the main port of reception, and lest it be thought that all the philanthropy belongs to our day, let it be noted that for forty years a Jesuit father met the vessels as they arrived, and looked after their unhappy victims. In the history of the trade there appear to have been periods of humane treatment,—times and places at first where a negro might serve for a term, be paid a sum, and then go free; but no record, save it be in the books that lie open before the Great White Throne, could tell the sufferings of those millions thrown in confusion, helpless and bound, upon the western lands.

CHAPTER XV

A BLACK MONOPOLY

WHEN the long wars which had been signalised by Marlborough's victories came to an end in the Peace of Utrecht (1712), Queen Anne went down to the House of Peers to communicate the terms. Here are some of the English gains, as she announced them :—‘Spain would yield to us the fortress of Gibraltar, the whole island of Minorca, and *the monopoly in the trade of negroes for thirty years.*’¹ Or, as it has been described in more euphonious phrase, ‘the asiento contract was to be entirely in the hands of England.’

This choicest piece of protection, the most astounding on our records, is not so much as mentioned in some of our histories. Yet Bolingbroke rejoiced in this as a great achievement. ‘Does it not make your blood curdle in your veins,’ he had previously written, ‘to hear it solemnly contended in Holland whether Britain shall enjoy the asiento’? The trend of English policy had long favoured the extension of the trade. No one thought of it as an organised emigration : the aim was an enormous monetary gain. It brought the slave

¹ Stanhope's *Queen Anne*.

trade within the line of statesmanship ; for good or for evil it became a commercial factor, as truly as any item in a budget ; and though a century was first to pass, Burke and Pitt and Fox and Wilberforce were to redeem the name of England from this infamy. Even in the age of Anne—that proud ‘Augustan age’—Pope saw further than Bolingbroke !

Lo, the poor Indian, whose untutor'd mind,
Sees God in clouds, or hears Him in the wind ;
His soul proud science never taught to stray
Far as the solar walk, or Milky Way ;
Yet simple Nature to his hope has given
Behind the cloud-topt hill an humble heav'n ;
Some safer world in depths of woods embraced,
Some happier island in the watery waste,
Where slaves once more their native land behold,
No fiends torment, no Christians thirst for gold.

Steele, in the *Spectator*, showed the baser side in his pathetic story of ‘Inkle and Yarico’ ; the subject may have been suggested to him by his Barbadoes estate.

England stood then on the edge of a great commercial expansion. The most of people, if they thought of the negro at all, thought of him as born for servitude as a beast is born for its burden. They flattered themselves that he was well cared for, and often spoke as if the transfer rescued him from a worse fate on the African coast. How England administered this human trust it is now difficult to say. Little was told beyond what was casually gleaned from sailors who had been in the trade ; and men too often, as was found long afterwards, concealed what they knew. This general lack of knowledge may be justly pleaded as one

explanation of the apathy of the churches. When they awoke, the horrors of the trade were unveiled, but no one ever knew its extent or full iniquity till the last century, when travellers laid bare the interior of Africa.

Hawkins found the land well cultivated, bearing plenty of grain and fruit, and some of the 'towns' prettily divided with a main street, and the houses with rough but considerable furniture. Other accounts suggest that tribal wars multiplied with the advent of the white man. One later writer describes a coast-line of two hundred miles as dense forest which a century before had been under cultivation. Yet as southern Italy slumbers under sulphur clouds, and the marks of the volcano are everywhere, so behind this malarial belt appalling customs and cruelties were found to be native to the soil, and depths of abomination have broken into sight.

Portugal planted forts from point to point along the coast, and ships purchased slaves from Portuguese dealers. The 'sole rights' were leased to them, and they essayed to keep them till 1668. Then the Seville merchants put in a claim. Afterwards France and England had their share; the several contracts were known as the *asiento*. There was at one time—showing the value set upon the trade from another side—a bounty of thirteen livres paid from the king's revenue in France for every negro carried to the French islands or colonies. The Dutch too had their forts. Spain seized an opportunity to purchase back all agreements. Then came the Utrecht negotiations. Louis XIV., who had been a shareholder in the Guinea

company, gave his support to England. The issue cannot be better told than in the words of Bancroft, the historian of the United States, which were, more than any country, affected by this arrangement :—

‘ Her Britannic Majesty did offer and undertake, such are the words of the treaty, by persons whom she shall appoint, to bring into the West Indies of America belonging to His Catholic Majesty, in the space of thirty years, 144,000 negroes, at the rate of 4,800 in each of the said thirty years ; paying, on 4,000 of them, a duty of thirty-three and a third dollars a head. The *asientists* might introduce as many more as they pleased at the less rate of duty of sixteen and two-thirds dollars a head. Exactest care was taken to secure a monopoly. No Frenchman nor Spaniard nor any other persons might introduce one negro slave into Spanish America. For the Spanish world in the Gulf of Mexico, on the Atlantic, and along the Pacific, as well as for the English colonies, her Britannic Majesty, by persons of her appointment, was the exclusive slave trader. England extorted the privilege of filling the New World with negroes. As great profits were anticipated from the trade, Philip V. of Spain took one quarter of the common stock, agreeing to pay for it by a stock-note ; Queen Anne reserved to herself another quarter [which she subsequently divided between Lady Masham and some of her favourites] ; and the remaining moiety was to be divided among her subjects. The sovereigns of England and Spain became the largest slave merchants ever known in the history of the world.’

The Abbé Raynal, who, with the aid of Diderot, attempted in 1780 a survey of the existing commercial systems, and denounced slavery as few in England had then done, estimated that 9,000,000 of negroes had been exported from Africa to the various American colonies, north and south. Bancroft calculates that in the century preceding the American prohibition of the slave trade the number imported by the English alone must have been nearly 3,000,000, while another 250,000 purchased in Africa had been thrown into the Atlantic on the voyage. 'The gross returns of English merchants for the traffic in that number of slaves may have been not far from 400,000,000 of dollars.'

The contract was brought to an end by a quarrel a few years before the expiry of the term. It had been welcomed as paving the way for South Sea commerce. So now when the South Sea Company exploded its famous Bubble, it held on to its manipulation of the slave trade, Liverpool stepping forward when London fell back. The exclusive regulations of other commerce belonging to Spain were perpetually infringed by English merchant smugglers, for the clumsy restrictions of trade made smuggling almost a benefaction. Disputes arose as to territory in North America. Then came war. But apparently the only effect of the failure of the contract was that the ports of Africa were thrown open to English competition, while the English monopoly was still to the utmost enforced against foreigners. On the return of peace the contract was renewed for two years, when Spain bought back her share, and we hear no more of it.

Montesquieu, who visited America at this time, condemned slavery on general grounds, and he made the caustic remark not to be forgotten, 'It is impossible to allow the negroes to be men, because if we allow them to be men, it will begin to be believed that we are not Christians.' This question of race was raised in various forms, and has hardly yet ceased to be debated.

The number of negroes who perished ingloriously through the slave trade was probably as great as the numbers of North and South who afterwards fell on the battlefields of the Civil War.

CHAPTER XVI

VOICES IN THE WILDERNESS

THE Journal of George Fox and *The Journal of John Woolman* are memorable books. Thomas Elwood, Milton's friend, who first read *Paradise Lost*, and who suggested *Paradise Regained*, was also the one who wrote out Fox's *Journal* after his death, and so secured it for centuries to come. *Sartor Resartus*, with a dash of the extravagance natural to him, says that in history the day when George Fox the shoemaker made himself a pair of leathern breeches is of more moment than that which witnessed the battle of Waterloo. It was also a day of moment when John Woolman decided to give up a profitable business, and become a working tailor, that he might be unencumbered for service, and took to wearing clothes of undyed homespun in pre-Jaeger style, because dyes were hurtful. For so temperate a writer as Whittier testifies, in allusion to him, that 'A far-reaching moral, social and political revolution, undoing the evil work of centuries, unquestionably owes much of its original impulse to the life and labours of a poor, unlearned working man of New Jersey, whose very existence was scarcely

known beyond the narrow circle of his religious society.' Thus it happens that when kings and emperors have passed their way, and great soldiers and great statesmen have relaid the foundations of society, perhaps many times, the springs of beneficent change have often been found among the common people.

Barbadoes was the first of the West Indian Islands that came into the possession of England. Quakers had been banished there, and also to Jamaica; and Fox, who spent two years in America, in a journey of evangelisation, crossed first to Barbadoes. His advices to the Friends whom he found were both sagacious and devout. 'Then, as to their blacks and negroes,' he writes in his *Journal*, 'I desired them to endeavour to train them up in the fear of God, those that were bought, and those born in their families, that all might come to the knowledge of the Lord; that so, with Joshua, every master of a family might say, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." I desired them also that they would cause their overseers to deal mildly and gently with their negroes, and not use cruelty towards them, as the manner of some hath been and is; and that after certain years of servitude they would make them free.'

This was in 1671; thus the name of George Fox stands among the first of those who pleaded for the negro. He gathered the negroes in several plantations, and was charged with inducing them to rebel, but what he really did was to exhort them to 'justice, sobriety, temperance, chastity and piety, and to be

subject to their masters and governors.' In a paper addressed to the Governor of Barbadoes with his Council and Assembly, before he left, was a reminder that 'Negroes, Tawnies, Indians, made up a very great part of the families in the island, for whom an account will be required by Him who comes to judge both quick and dead.' Afterwards he spent some time in Jamaica, and then passed over to Maryland.

Whatever there might be of the mystical and extreme in some of Fox's utterances, there was a simple practicality in much that he said and did. For instance, in Cornwall he found wrecking a common practice, and at once wrote a protest which he sent to every parish priest and magistrate; it was a cruel abomination, and yet but piracy on land, the spirit of the buccaneers—the spirit also that we have seen to be rampant in Europe. The fact of its existence in Cornwall may help us to understand the long continuance of the slave trade elsewhere. There was an evil darkness upon men. Fox, when he laid stress on the inward light as more than tradition—as greater than the letter—helped forward the emancipation of thought; and those who came after him put into morality a living soul, with the Sermon on the Mount as inspiration. They made mistakes, but they had the courage to challenge custom. The revision of conventional practice—that of the slave trade included—was a natural consequence of their creed.

Contemporary with George Fox was Richard Baxter. He too seems to have been moved by what he heard of Barbadoes, for he speaks of the

judgments that were falling upon the island—of a great fire, of the drowning of the governor and ships at sea, and of the terrible mortality prevailing. In his *Christian Directory* he gives a section to those masters in foreign plantations who have negroes and other slaves. He pleads strongly for the slaves that ‘Nature made them equal,’ that ‘God is their absolute owner,’ and that Christ died to redeem them. He says it is ‘well of princes who make laws that infidel slaves shall be free men, when they are duly christened,’ and he warns masters from selfishly keeping back their slaves from Christian privileges. The Spaniards had ‘murdered millions,’ as testified by a Jesuit of their own race; but Englishmen, if they destroyed souls, might fall into a cruelty ‘of the same kind.’ The slave trade he condemns:—‘To go as pirates and catch up poor negroes or people of another land that never forfeited life or liberty, and to make them slaves and sell them is one of the worst kinds of thievery in the world; and such persons are to be taken for the common enemies of mankind; and they that buy them and use them as beasts, for their mere commodity, and betray or destroy or neglect their souls, are fitter to be called incarnate devils than Christians.’

The first treatise expressly dedicated to the cause of the negroes seems to have been written by an English clergyman, Morgan Godwyn, who had seen with his own eyes their sufferings in Barbadoes. His efforts to instruct them were opposed by the planters—how contemptuous the general feeling we may learn from the phrase of a ‘religious person’ who expostulated

with Godwyn that he 'might as well baptize a puppy' as a certain young negro whose mother was a Christian—but others arose in the island who had his spirit. The condition of the negroes began to attract attention at home. The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel widely circulated a sermon preached by Bishop Fleetwood in 1780, which vigorously asserted their claim; and the names of men like Berkeley and Butler follow among those who pleaded their right to Christian privilege.

We pass with Woolman far into the next century. In his *Journal*, under date about 1740, we find him writing:—'In a few months after I came here, my master bought several Scotchmen servants, from on board a vessel, and brought them to Mount Holly to sell,'—and this he mentions casually, as prelude to an incident of another kind, without comment. Was there any white slavery in America after it had faded out of Europe? The answer may be found in advertisements which survive. Here is one: 'To be sold, a schoolmaster, an indented servant, that hath got two years to serve';¹ and others might be quoted relating to 'indented and convict servants.' A medley of scamps and idealists was poured upon the new coast, both in the higher ranks and in the lower, so that for many a long year it used to be said, 'America was the hospital of Europe.' There were the convicts, used as servants or labourers, as they have been and are now in other colonies, whose freedom was rightly

¹ *Old Maryland*, by T. W. Palmer. (See *Century*.)

forfeit to the law. But there was also a class called 'Redemptioners' who were brought out but sold themselves into service for five years to repay the cost of their passage ; and there were yet others called 'freewillers,' who were taken out on condition of being allowed a certain number of days in which to dispose of themselves to the best advantage.

The most memorable transaction of this class belonged to 1619, when, as roughly described, ninety respectable young women were sent out from England and sold to the planters for one hundred pounds of tobacco each. Thus a system of indenture was applied to many white emigrants, which corresponded in some degree with that now in vogue in some colonies for alien races ; apprenticeship even being in earlier times a rule of some severity.

Woolman's entry recalls a kidnapping scandal that terrorised Aberdeen—a crime on a scale now almost inconceivable—between 1740 and 1746.¹ It was a season of distress and famine, and children were collected under pressure, and bought to be sent out to the American plantations. The procedure was regarded as a business one, and there was no secrecy. As many as six hundred of these miserable conscripts were carried off. The house where they were detained till they could be deported was pointed out not long since on the Green. 'When a father who had been robbed of his son instituted an action for redress before the Lords of Session, no officer in Aberdeen could be prevailed on to cite the parties to appear in

¹ *Old Aberdeen*, by Mrs. Mayo.

court.' One of the kidnapped lads grew to manhood, came back, and published the facts. His book was burnt by the common hangman, and he himself fined, and banished from the city ; but in the end punishment fell upon some few of the guilty, and justice was in part tardily done.

CHAPTER XVII

JOHN WOOLMAN

ISAIAH'S words breathe a divine pathos above our mortal life : they have a solitary grandeur that belongs to One only :—

He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be
heard in the street ;

A bruised reed shall he not break,
And the smoking flax shall he not quench ;
He shall bring forth judgment unto truth.

They come to our thought as we follow the track of John Woolman. In few of the sons of men has the spirit of the Sermon on the Mount found so simple expression. Almost the first glimpse we catch of him is an accidental one, of a little lad sitting on one side, while his companions are at play, and reading from the Revelation : ' He showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.' His nature seemed attuned to high thoughts, yet the 'light of common day' broke round him, the vanities of youth distressed his spirit, and regrets fell like a tender shower upon holy purposes buried below.

Born in 1720 at Northampton, in Burlington County, West Jersey, he spent his early years with his parents,

and wrought on the plantation; coming of age he left home and found occupation with a shopkeeper and baker, who placed him in charge of a shop about five miles from his father's house. 'I was early convinced,' he writes, 'that true religion consisted in an inward life, wherein the heart doth love and reverence God the Creator, and learns to exercise true justice and goodness, not only toward all men, but also toward the brute creation.' This was the essence of his creed on its practical side, and practical he was from the beginning, and prompt in minutest things, though not self-assertive, but ever waiting to be taught. And so all through, his pleas might satisfy La Rochefoucauld; they are not to 'pity' but to justice, they are never to sentiment but to right, and never to expediency but to the higher wisdom. See this conscience under training:—

'My employer, having a negro woman, sold her, and desired me to write a bill of sale, the man being waiting who bought her. The thing was sudden: and though I felt uneasy at the thoughts of writing an instrument of slavery for one of my fellow-creatures, yet I remembered that I was hired by the year, that it was my master who directed me to do it, and that it was an elderly man, a member of our society who bought her; so through weakness I gave way and wrote it, but at the executing of it I was so afflicted in my mind that I said before my master and the friend that I believed slave-keeping to be a practice inconsistent with the Christian religion.'

Many similar requests to draw a bill of sale were

addressed to him in after years, but he always refused, and often in such a way as to secure the freedom of the slaves. Offers of profitable business were made to him, but he had come to think that a way of life free from much entanglement was the best for him, and that 'an humble man, with the blessing of the Lord, might live on little.' When he found himself actually in possession of a growing business, he gave it up, and chose to remain simply a working tailor, in which calling he found time and freedom. Then the silent man was impelled sometimes to speak; the Friends whose meetings he attended listened, and he was drawn forward by the urgency of his message, so that in the course of years he visited many places far apart. There were thousands of slaves in New Jersey at that time; they had planned an insurrection not long before; many Friends believed in slavery as an ordainment, and kept slaves. Woolman sometimes found himself in the houses of slave-holders; he shrank from food prepared by slaves; and scrupulously contrived to give money where he partook of it, that he might not be dependent on them.

'I saw in these southern provinces,' we find him writing, back as far as 1746, 'so many vices and corruptions increased by this trade and this way of life, that it appeared to me as a dark gloominess hanging over the land; and though now many willingly run into it, yet in future the consequence will be grievous to posterity. I express it as it hath appeared to me, not once nor twice, but as a matter fixed on my mind.' As we follow his *Journal*, we perceive the

deepening feeling. The burden of the Lord descends upon him. Here are some words spoken at a Friends' meeting :—

‘My mind is often led to consider the purity of the divine Being, and the justice of His judgments; and herein my soul is covered with awfulness . . . Many slaves on this continent are oppressed, and their cries have reached the ears of the most High. Such are the purity and certainty of His judgments, that He cannot be partial in our favour. In infinite love and goodness He hath opened our understanding from one time to another concerning our duty towards this people, and it is not a time for delay. Should we now be sensible of what He requires of us, and through a respect to the private interest of some persons, or through a regard to some friendships which do not stand on an immutable foundation, neglect to do our duty in firmness and constancy, still waiting for some extraordinary means to bring about their deliverance, God may by terrible things in righteousness answer us in this matter.’

Year by year his work grew into the nature of a house to house visitation, wherever Quakers held negroes; it was unprompted save by the inward spirit, and of course, labour unpaid save in the enlightenment of those he convinced. His vigilant charity inclined him to be fair in argument, and just in judgment. ‘Before I left home,’ we find him writing, ‘my mind was often sad, under which exercise I felt at times the Holy Spirit which helps our infirmities, and through which my prayers were at times put up to God in private that He would be pleased to purge me from all

selfishness, that I might be strengthened to discharge my duty faithfully how hard soever to the natural part.'

It is not given to man to sum the spiritual processes. Many a one surrendered to his pleas; the fields were sown, and the seed remained under the dullest sod; and the testimony of the Friends grew steadily clearer and stronger, as his particular influence mingled in the general movement. The *Journal* is like a noiseless stream, upon whose sequestered depths now and again the light silently flashes, making us gaze and marvel. Here is such a passage:—

'As I have thus considered these things, a query at times hath arisen. Do I in all my proceedings keep to that use of things which is agreeable to universal righteousness? And then there hath some degree of sadness at times come over me, because I accustomed myself to some things which have occasioned more labour than I believe Divine wisdom intended for us.'

Amongst his last journeys was one to the West Indies. Afterwards, in 1772, he visited England, where he was much troubled to find the place held by the slave trade. While at York he was overtaken by the small-pox and died. A friend who was present took down the following prayer which escaped from him as he lay awaiting death:—

'O Lord my God! the amazing horrors of darkness were gathered around me, and covered me all over, and I saw no way to go forth. I felt the depth and extent of the misery of my fellow-creatures separated from the Divine harmony, and it was heavier than I could bear, and I was crushed down under it. I lifted up my hand,

I stretched out my arm, but there was none to help me ; I looked round about and was amazed. In the depths of misery, O Lord ! I remembered that Thou art omnipotent ; that I had called Thee Father ; and I felt that I loved Thee, and I was made quiet in my will, and I waited for deliverance from Thee. Thou hadst pity upon me when no man could help me. I saw that meekness under suffering was showed to us in the most affecting example of Thy Son, and Thou taught me to follow Him, and I said, "Thy will, O Father, be done."'

Whittier himself was a Quaker, and one of the poets of freedom. We quote therefore a few of the sentences, characteristic also of himself, in which he speaks of this *Journal* :—

'It is observable, that in his frequent mentions throughout his *Journal* of inward trials and afflictions, he nowhere betrays any personal solicitude and merely selfish anxiety for his own soul. His singular conscientious scruples, his close self-questionings, are prompted by a tender concern for universal well-being—an earnest desire that no act or omission of his own should add to the evil and misery under which the creation groans. He offered no prayers for special personal favours. He was, to use his own words, mixed with his fellow-creatures in their misery, and could not consider himself a distinct and separate being. He left all that concerns self to the will of his Father in Heaven.'

In a life like this we come again upon one of the contrasts of which Christian history is full. With

centuries of slavery behind him, with the nations then in their greed hastening to trample whole races down, with only here and there a great thinker defining freedom, or a clear voice claiming it, this crystal-minded, humble-hearted tailor has the vision of a perfected brotherhood, speaks fearlessly, toils incessantly for this Evangel. He is not alone in his view, but he is among the first to plead from man to man that the freeing of every individual slave is an act of urgent justice. It is not a theory of right that he sets forth so much as an immediate practical duty. His power was solely in the spirit of the Sermon on the Mount. That sermon pronounced the doom of slavery.

Such lives may serve to remind us of the interludes of history, of the quiet places and days of light that have no place on its tumultuous pages,—of the vital forces that slumber unseen, and have been strength of endurance to the world in its most buffeted ages.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE QUAKER PROTEST

THE Quakers who first crossed the Atlantic were followed by an evil name, they were regarded as dangerous and heretical intruders, the States would one and all have excluded them. They quickly rose above restriction. From the time of the founding of Pennsylvania by William Penn, the Friends became a power in the moulding of America. We have seen how they were tempted from their first practice into slaveholding. The noble-minded Oglethorpe, who founded Savannah (1734) to make it a home for the distressed, would have excluded slavery, for he declared it contrary to the Gospel, as well as the fundamental law of England, but in a few years he found himself powerless.

The English Quakers in 1727, at a meeting in London, affirmed 'That the importing of negroes from their native country by Friends is not a commendable nor allowed practice, and is therefore censured by this meeting.' This feeling strengthened, and after repeated expostulations, but not till another generation had passed, they took the step of disavowing all who continued the practice.

In America one of the earliest and most emphatic protests came, in 1688, from a body of German Quakers who had settled in Pennsylvania. They ventured a public declaration: 'Though the negroes are black we cannot conceive there is more liberty to have them slaves than it is to have other white ones. There is a saying that we should do to all men like as we would be done by ourselves, making no difference of what generation, descent, or colour.'

Woolman, when his time came, was not the only one who protested. A little before him was the eccentric Benjamin Lay, who lived in a natural cave in a wood near Philadelphia, and used to go forth and denounce the slave-holders like a whilom prophet. A schoolmaster of Huguenot extraction, Anthony Benezet, who became a Quaker, collected information and gave effectual service for many years to the cause of freedom. He established a free school at Philadelphia for the education of black people, and left money for its support. His correspondence was supplemented by several books, and his disinterested advocacy won wide respect.

The subject came up for frequent discussion in the yearly meetings of the Friends, and official action was taken from time to time to restrict the practice. Slave-trading was prohibited in 1776 by the New York Meeting, and afterwards it was made a disciplinary offence to buy, sell, or hold slaves upon any condition. In 1773 the Virginia Meeting recommended manumission, and the appointment of committees to instruct and aid the manumitted. Ten years later all

questions were at an end, and slavery had ceased in the Society of Friends.

When the earliest anti-slavery societies began their work, almost with the Revolution, the Quakers gave them soul. The blight of slavery proved, however, too much for this first efflorescence of high purpose; the impulse of aggression weakened, and behind inaction lurked indifference. The false supremacy which for a long period held back so large a section of religious America from the rough and tumble of social and political contests imposed its baleful restraints also upon too many of the passive Quaker folk. In the next century we find the gentle Whittier in the prime of his days writing: 'If within the last ten years anything has been done for the cause of freedom in this country, our Society cannot claim any credit for it. God, in His all-wise Providence, has raised up other instrumentalities to do His work. . . . The anti-slavery cause has not made me less a Quaker, but it has given me a more enlarged charity—a deeper sense of the universal brotherhood.' It was about this time that another great effort was made in the formation of trading associations based exclusively on free labour.

There came a sharp division of opinions when the policy of immediate abolition was brought into the front. Very many Quakers inclined to colonisation and gradual emancipation as the preferable course. The noble-minded William Forster came over from England to try to stop the threatening breach, but without effect. Eight years later he returned with other Friends—that time to carry from the London

Yearly Meeting an address on Slavery to the President of the United States, as also to each of the governors of the several States, and while in East Tennessee was taken ill and died.

By way of defining the position, note this advertisement from a Virginia paper of the eighteenth century. A 'Negro fellow' named Bob has run away, he is described, and then follows :—

'The said fellow is outlawed, and *I will give ten pounds reward for his head severed from his body, or forty shillings if brought alive.* He has been burnt in the hand, and I suppose some evil-disposed person has given him a pass, that he may pass for a freeman.'

Or here is another from North Carolina, touching one 'Zeb' :—

'He is a very good cooper by trade ; he is remarkably black, plays on the violin, and has a great deal to say for himself. As he is outlawed, I will pay twenty pounds proclamation money, out of what the Act of Assembly allows in such cases, to any person who shall produce his head severed from his body, and five pounds proclamation money, if brought home alive.'

A man was outlawed if he absented himself from his master's service for three months.

The negroes of Jamaica, as their numbers increased, conspired to massacre the whites, and about this time rose in insurrection. The precipitate action of one of their bands betrayed their purpose before their plans

were matured ; but in a few hours the whole island was involved in terror and confusion. The planters called to their aid the free blacks,—the wild negroes, as they were commonly called,—who, allured by the price set upon the head of every rebel, fell upon the insurgents, and slew so many that numbers more made away with themselves in despair.

The struggle was prolonged for some months. In the end the prisoners taken, being tried and found guilty, were, says the sober Smollett, ‘put to death by a variety of tortures. Some were hanged, some beheaded, some burned, and some fixed alive upon gibbets. One of these last lived eight days and eighteen hours, suspended under a vertical sun, without being refreshed by one drop of water, or receiving any manner of sustenance.’ To prevent such insurrections, regulations of the greatest severity were put into force.

These atrocities of punishment were not exceptional. They correspond with the earlier statement of Père Labat, who describes how insurgent slaves in the English islands were sometimes put into iron cages so small that they could not move, and then hung on the branch of a tree and left to perish from hunger or rage. *On appelle cela mettre un homme au sec.* In Florida, Emerson saw iron cages in the form of a mummy. In them a Spanish governor had hung offenders. There was a little iron loop on one side for a loaf of bread and a vessel of water. Thus provided, the victim was left to starve.

CHAPTER XIX

SLAVES CANNOT BREATHE IN ENGLAND

THERE came to London in 1750 a lad named Granville Sharp, the son of a clergyman at Durham, and the grandson of an archbishop. He was apprenticed to a linen-draper, and after completing his seven years, subject to some vicissitudes, took up his freedom of the city. On his father's death he obtained an appointment in the Ordnance Office. He had learned Greek, and afterwards Hebrew, in order the better to discuss religious questions with two of his companions ; and it was not long before the keenness of mind thus displayed found by accident another sphere.

The negro was a familiar personage in London at this time. West India merchants came attended by their black servant, who was looked upon as an appendage of wealth and position. The newspapers contained advertisements for the sale of slaves, and offered rewards for the capture of fugitives. Forlorn blacks hung about the streets. One morning, Granville, calling on his brother, who was a doctor in Mincing Lane, saw a negro coming, in extreme weakness. His name was Jonathan Strong. He had been the slave of



THE CAPTAIN SEIZED THE NEGRO BY THE ARM. 'SIR,' SAID SHARP,
'I CHARGE YOU WITH ASSAULT.'

David Lisle, a lawyer of Barbadoes, who had beaten him violently over the head with a pistol, and turned him into the street, almost blind. The two brothers took him into their care, placed him in St. Bartholemew's Hospital, where he remained for four months, and when he was restored found him employment. Two years had passed, when Lisle, seeing Strong in the street, had him arrested. He sent word to Granville, who gave information of his detention without a warrant, and applied to the Lord Mayor for a summons (1765).

It appeared that Strong had been sold to a Jamaica planter, who refused to pay the purchase money until the negro had been delivered on board a particular ship, the captain of which now attended to take him away. The Lord Mayor ruled that 'the lad had not stolen anything, and was not guilty of any offence, and was therefore at liberty' to go where he pleased. Whereupon the captain seized the negro by the arm. —'Sir,' said Sharp, 'I charge you for an assault.' The captain let go, and Strong followed his defender away, no one daring to touch him. Lisle challenged Sharp to a duel, but also brought an action. Sharp was advised by an eminent solicitor, who appealed to precedents, that it could not be defended. Taking advantage of delays in the procedure, he gave himself to the thorough study of the law as it bore upon 'the liberty of person' in British subjects. A note of his conclusions was found on a detached sheet of paper. The closing sentences run:—'There is no law to justify a claim to the servitude of any man in England, native or alien, unless he is indentured for a term of

years with his own consent. An Act was passed in 1st Edward VI., by which vagabonds were made slaves but was repealed the 3rd or 4th of the same reign. And, besides, the word slaves, or anything that can justify the enslaving of others, is not to be found, God be thanked, in any other law or statute whatever—at least that I am able to find out.'

The result of his researches he embodied in a manuscript tract, 'On the Injustice and dangerous Tendency of tolerating Slavery, or even of admitting the least claim to private Property in the Persons of Men in England.' It is in many ways significant that the substance of this tract, in twenty or more different manuscript copies, was handed about among the lawyers for nearly two years. Its argument was incontrovertible. It was afterwards printed: Benezet secured its circulation in America, and it had permanent influence. Lisle had judgment given against him with treble costs. In two other instances in which his help was asked, both of violence, Sharp succeeded in rescuing the victims, in one case recovering the man by a writ of *habeas corpus* from a ship as it lay wind-bound in the Downs.

James Somerset was a negro from Virginia who had been brought over, and having left his master had been seized unawares to be again sold into slavery. In this fourth case the individual claim was subordinated to the test of principle. It was tried before Lord Chief-Justice Mansfield, in the Court of King's Bench; and there were considerable intervals between the hearings. The counsel who opened the case declared his intention

of maintaining the proposition :—‘ That no man at this day is or can be a slave in England ’; and the counsel who closed the proceedings on that side ventured the assurance that when judgment was given slave-holders would know that ‘ when they introduce a slave into this country as a slave this air is too free for him to breathe in.’ Lord Mansfield had shown signs of shrinking from the greatness of the issue, but his judgment remains ever memorable. The highest legal authorities many years before had assured the planters that neither baptism, as was supposed, nor coming to England, made any alteration in the temporal state of the slave. Mansfield put aside this view, and reduced the whole controversy to facts.

‘ The question is, whether the captain has returned a sufficient cause for the detainer of Somerset. The cause returned is, that he had kept him by order of his master, with an intent to send him abroad to Jamaica, there to be sold. So high an act of dominion must derive its force from the law of the country ; and if to be justified here must be justified by the laws of England. Slavery has been different in different ages and States. The exercise of the power of a master over his slave must be supported by the laws of particular countries ; but no foreigner can in England claim a right over a man ; such a claim is not known to the laws of England.

‘ Immemorial usage preserves a positive law, after the occasion or accident which gave rise to it has been forgotten ; and, tracing the subject to natural principles, the claim of slavery never can be supported. The

power claimed never was in use here, or acknowledged by the law. Upon the whole, we cannot say the cause returned is sufficient by the law ; and therefore the man must be discharged.' ¹

The judgment of Chief-Justice Holt, to which Sharp had appealed against the later lawyers, had declared that 'as soon as a Negro comes into England he becomes free. One may be a villein in England, but not a slave.'

Mansfield's decision was given in 1772. The spirit of this judgment has breathed through English story. Cowper gave it voice in the *Task*, which was published in the year when England lost her Colonies, and is coloured with the sense of calamity. His words must have place here, for there is no finer expression of English feeling on this subject in our literature.

My ear is pained,
My soul is sick, with every day's report
Of wrong and outrage, with which earth is filled.
There is no flesh in man's obdurate heart,
It does not feel for man ; the natural bond
Of brotherhood is severed as the flax
That falls asunder at the touch of fire.
He finds his fellow guilty of a skin
Not coloured like his own ; and having power
T' enforce the wrong, for such a worthy cause
Dooms and devotes him as a lawful prey.
Lands intersected by a narrow frith
Abhor each other. Mountains interposed
Make enemies of nations, who had else
Like kindred drops been mingled into one.
Thus man devotes his brother, and destroys ;

¹ *Life of Granville Sharp*, by Prince Hoare.

And, worse than all, and most to be deplored
 As human nature's broadest, foulest blot,
 Chains him, and tasks him, and exacts his sweat
 With stripes, that mercy with a bleeding heart
 Weeps, when she sees inflicted on a beast.
 Then, what is man? And what man, seeing this,
 And having human feelings, does not blush,
 And hang his head, to think himself a man?
 I would not have a slave to till my ground,
 To carry me, to fan me while I sleep,
 And tremble when I wake, for all the wealth
 That sinews bought and sold have ever earned.
 No, dear as freedom is, and in my heart's
 Just estimation prized above all price,
 I had much rather be myself the slave,
 And wear the bonds, than fasten them on him.
 We have no slaves at home. Then why abroad?
 And they themselves once ferried o'er the wave
 That parts us, are emancipate and loosed.
 Slaves cannot breathe in England; if their lungs
 Receive our air, that moment they are free;
 They touch our country, and their shackles fall.
 That is noble, and bespeaks a nation proud
 And jealous of the blessing. Spread it then,
 And let it circulate through every vein
 Of all your empire; that where Britain's power
 Is felt, mankind may feel her mercy too.

A fugitive slave in the Persian Gulf, clambering on to the deck of a British man-of-war, has before now realised the virtue of these winds of heaven.

The quality of the air, which both poet and lawyer extol, would, however, seem to have been Elizabethan, for the leading counsel for Somerset referred back to the case of one 'who brought a slave from Russia and would scourge him; for this he was questioned, and it

was resolved that England was too pure an air for slaves to breathe in. This was in the 11th of Queen Elizabeth. I hope, my Lord,' added the counsel, addressing Mansfield, 'the air does not blow worse since.'

Cowper's own line is one of the earliest and clearest enunciations of a policy that was to make England great :

We have no slaves at home. Then why abroad ?

CHAPTER XX

GRANVILLE SHARP

THE first movement against the slave trade came from America, where economical considerations reinforced philanthropy. The colonial legislatures were overborne by England; Virginia would have imposed a prohibitory duty on the importation of negroes, but it was not allowed; South Carolina made an ineffectual effort to check it. Benezet, in a letter (1772), tells Sharp that 'the people of New England have made a new law that nearly amounts to a prohibition of the trade,' and that in Maryland and Virginia ten or twenty thousand are ready to petition against it. In that year the House of Burgesses in Virginia sent a petition to the king, in which they 'implored his majesty's paternal assistance in averting a calamity of the most alarming nature.' 'The importation of slaves,' they urge, 'hath long been considered as a trade of great inhumanity, and under its present encouragement we have too much reason to fear will endanger your majesty's American dominions.' Benezet describes the position thus:—

'There are about 850,000 negroes in the English colonies and islands. In Jamaica alone, by the poll-

tax in that island for the year 1768, it appears that there were then 166,914 *taxable* negroes (doubtless there were enough more) who either eluded the tax, or who were not taxable to make up 200,000. And, by the best account I can obtain (not many more, if any), but 15,000 whites; and the trade for slaves still carried on with such vigour that we have reason to conclude there is still yearly at least 100,000 violently brought from Africa by the English alone. These are employed to make some new settlement, as in the islands of Tobago, St. Vincent, etc.; also, to make up deficiencies, and to sell to the Spaniards.'

Granville Sharp was quick to see that the action of parliament was jeopardising the freedom of the young colonies. When the American War broke out he resigned his place in the Ordnance Office. As soon as *The Gazette* announced the battle of Charlestown, and letters came with large demands for ordnance stores, he 'thought it right,' as he wrote to his chief, 'to declare his objections to the being in any way concerned in that unnatural business.' Leave of absence was granted him, and more than once renewed, but the war continuing he withdrew altogether. His brothers invited him to share their home, and he gave his newly-found leisure to literary studies and such public questions as seemed to invite his help. It was in vain that he sought to secure a basis of reconciliation between this country and America.

His vigorous and sagacious mind was soon immersed in other duties; his disinterested spirit was born for service among his fellows. He had won general respect



GRANVILLE SHARP.

by his conduct of the Somerset case. Step by step he was led into renewed collision with the iniquities of slavery. When the king suggested 'new laws for supplying defects or remedying abuses,' he wrote to Lord North, with strong, appealing words, that there was 'no instance whatever which requires more immediate redress than the present miserable and deplorable slavery of negroes and Indians, as well as white English servants, in our colonies.' One by one he saw all the bishops. The Spaniards were introducing regulations at the Havannahs by which a slave might work out his freedom, and it was thought that something might be done in a similar way for gradual emancipation in the English colonies.

Of more effect than any such discussions was a communication made to him by a negro, who brought tidings of 130 negroes being thrown alive into the sea from on board an English slave-ship. The owners of the ship claimed from the insurers the full value of these drowned slaves, estimated at £30 apiece. It appeared that the ship had sailed from the African coast with 440 slaves on board; that in beating across to Jamaica nearly three months had passed; that 60 slaves and 7 white people had died; that of the surviving slaves many were sick, and that the captain then proposed to throw these into the sea; that 122, some of them being fettered with irons, were cast overboard; and that 10 others in terror leaped over and were drowned. The master of the ship had explained to his officers that if the slaves died a natural death the loss would fall on the owners, but that if they were

thrown into the sea under any necessity for the safety of the ship it would fall on the underwriters. It was pleaded that he had discovered a paucity of water, but it was proved that no person had been put on short allowance, and that plentiful rain fell before the sailors in turn had completed their inhuman task.

The verdict of the jury being given in favour of the owners, the underwriters obtained a rule for a new trial. Sharp watched the case, employed counsel, and spared neither labour nor expense to obtain information. Then he addressed a letter to the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty with a full report of the case, asking them to judge whether there was sufficient evidence for a criminal prosecution of 'the murderers'; and sent a copy of this letter to the premier of that year, putting forward the facts as evidence of the demoralisation induced by the slave trade, and as warning of the 'absolute necessity to abolish' both that and 'the West India slavery.' The Solicitor-General had appeared for the owners. 'What is all this vast declamation,' he said, 'of human people being thrown overboard? The question, after all, is: Was it voluntary, or an act of necessity? This is a case of chattels or goods. It is really so—it is the case of throwing over goods; for to this purpose, and the purpose of the insurance, they are goods and property; whether right or wrong, we have nothing to do with it.' The Admiralty took no further steps.

One result of the decision which declared all slaves free in England was that London became a city of refuge. This made Granville Sharp the more desirous

of providing some outlet for freed negroes on the African coast, and inclined the government to support his project.

Sierra Leone was selected for the experiment, and a company organised for colonisation there, in the hope of creating a settlement for liberated slaves, and establishing a point from which ready aid could be given in the civilisation of the coast. The first settlers sent out were a body of three or four hundred negroes, collected from those who were wandering destitute about the streets; to these were presently added (1792) more than a thousand from Newfoundland—negroes who had served with the British troops in the American War, and who had been settled, as a reward for their loyalty, in Nova Scotia, the climate of which had proved too cold for them, and who had petitioned to be transferred. The beginnings were inauspicious. The negroes from the city streets were men worn with hunger or intemperance, and nearly half of them perished on the voyage out; and hardly had the first little town been reared when a neighbouring chief fell upon it, and burnt it in revenge for losses inflicted on himself in a quarrel springing from a slave raid.

CHAPTER XXI

BOSWELL ON JOHNSON

SUCH incidents as the law-courts were bringing to light set men thinking. The less-instructed conventional view is unconsciously illustrated by Boswell in his comments on the vagaries of Dr. Johnson. That great Englishman was said to have startled a grave company at Oxford by proposing a toast, 'Here's to the next insurrection of the negroes in the West Indies.' Under date of 1777, Boswell records an argument as dictated by Johnson in favour of a negro who was then claiming his liberty in an action in the Court of Sessions in Scotland. It concludes:—

'The sum of the argument is this. No man is by nature the property of another. The defendant is therefore by nature free. The rights of nature must be some way forfeited before they can be justly taken away. That the defendant has by any act forfeited the rights of nature we require to be proved, and if no proof of such forfeiture can be given, we doubt not the justice of the court will declare him free.'

Boswell thinks that Dr. Johnson may have been

right in this particular case, but adds (writing at a later date):—

‘I beg leave to enter my most solemn protest against his general doctrine with respect to the slave trade. For I will resolutely say, that his unfavourable notion of it was owing to prejudice, and imperfect or false information. The wild and dangerous attempt which has for some time been persisted in to obtain an act of our legislature to abolish so very important and necessary a branch of commercial interest, must have been crushed at once, had not the insignificance of the zealots who vainly took the lead in it, made the vast body of planters, merchants, and others, whose immense properties are involved in the trade, reasonably enough suppose that there could be no danger. The encouragement which the attempt has received excites my wonder and indignation. . . . To abolish a *status*, which in all ages God has sanctioned, and man has continued, would not only be *robbery* to an innumerable class of our fellow-subjects, but it would be extreme cruelty to the African savages, a portion of whom it saves from massacre, or intolerable bondage in their own country, and introduces into a much happier state of life; especially now, when their passage to the West Indies, and their treatment there, is humanely regulated. To abolish this trade would be to

‘Shut the gates of mercy on mankind.’

CHAPTER XXII

CLARKSON AND WILBERFORCE

THE gradual formation of opinion led onward to the discussion of practical measures. Adam Smith, in his *Wealth of Nations*, condemned slavery on industrial grounds; Paley, in his *Moral and Political Economy*, declared the slave trade to be against nature. It were as easy to name the streams which make up a river as to enumerate all who contributed to this movement. Neither the succession nor the relative influence of men is of the first account in the progress of such a cause.

Among those who strengthened the impulse was James Ramsay, an Aberdeen man, who went out to the West Indies as a surgeon on board a man-of-war, settled at St. Kitt's, where he lived for nineteen years, took holy orders, and after his return home, sent forth from his vicarage in Kent an *Essay on the Condition of the Slaves*. He was virulently assailed, personal charges being made against him, but sustained the controversy till his health broke and death carried him off. Another eye-witness, who rendered distinguished service in the later stages, was James

Stephen; he was ten years resident in the West Indies, and after his return, though a Master in Chancery, surrendered much that he might the better aid the cause.

Archbishop Sharp, the grandfather of Granville Sharp, who had preached the coronation sermon of Queen Anne, had, while the negro question was attracting attention, preached before the House of Commons, pleading with solemn words of warning for 'that Africa which is not now more fruitful of monsters than it was once of excellently wise and learned men.' Dr. Peckard, the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Cambridge, was equally outspoken in preaching before the university a few years later, and when it fell to him to announce the subject for the Latin Disputation of the Senior Bachelors, he gave the question—*Anne liceat invitos in servitutem dare?*—Is it lawful to make slaves of others against their will?

Among the graduates to compete was Thomas Clarkson, the son of a clergyman, Master of Wisbech Grammar School. The subject absorbed him, and its horrors as he tracked them overwhelmed him. The first prize fell to him, but there was no elation in his mood as he journeyed to London after receiving it. More and more the slave trade filled his imagination. As he approached the village of Wade's Mill, in Hertfordshire, he sat down overborne by his thoughts upon the grass by the roadside, holding his horse by the bridle; and there came to him the young man's vision of a part in the conflict against this giant of evil. The wish grew into purpose,—gradually the way

cleared before him. He knew nothing of what others were doing. The first thing he did was to translate his essay, and to strengthen it with more facts ; then he inquired for a publisher and found one. More important was the help he received from a group of friends, amongst whom was William Dillwyn, who had been Benezet's secretary in America, and could tell him much. His publisher introduced him to Granville Sharp, who gave him all encouragement. Bennet Langton he knew, who had come to London when a lad of eighteen, after reading *The Rambler*, expressly to see Johnson, and whose frolics with the sage became part of the amusement of the Literary Club. Clarkson confided in him, and had his full sympathy. He also sought out Ramsay in Kent, and was by him introduced to more influential people. It was not long before he made acquaintance with most of those interested in the subject. He tracked out a slave-vessel lying in the Thames, and was spurred by the sight to fresh effort. In collecting information he had the aid of a sympathetic friend, and these two worked fifteen or sixteen hours a day in their new enthusiasm.

The name of Wilberforce was just rising into knowledge. He, when still a boy, had written a letter to a newspaper against 'the odious traffic in human flesh.' Wilberforce knew all that Ramsay could tell him ; he had made many inquiries, and was revolving the subject. Clarkson consulted him. Langton rendered a memorable service by inviting a few men of weight to meet at dinner, and talk over the matter. Sir Joshua Reynolds, we like to know, was one of the

company, and gave unqualified approval to the project for stopping the trade. It was suggested to Wilberforce, who was present, that he should raise the question in parliament, and then for the first time he announced his readiness to do so. Subsequently a committee was formed (1787) for procuring evidence and taking action. It consisted of twelve members, most of them city merchants, all of whom save three belonged to the Society of Friends; Sharp was named as chairman, but preferred to give his aid unofficially. Others were afterwards added.¹

It is testimony to the influence of John Newton that the brilliant Wilberforce early sought his counsel on religious questions, bringing himself one Sunday to St. Mary Woolnoth the letter in which he asked for an interview. Who could imagine that these two men, starting in life from points so far apart, should meet for this purpose? In his days on the African coast, Newton had once written:—

‘Though we have been here six months I have not been two days in the ship, being continually cruising about in the boats to purchase souls, for which we are obliged to take as much pains as the Jesuits are said to do in making proselytes, sometimes venturing in a little canoe through seas like mountains, sometimes travelling through the woods, often in danger from the wild beasts and much oftener from the wild inhabitants,

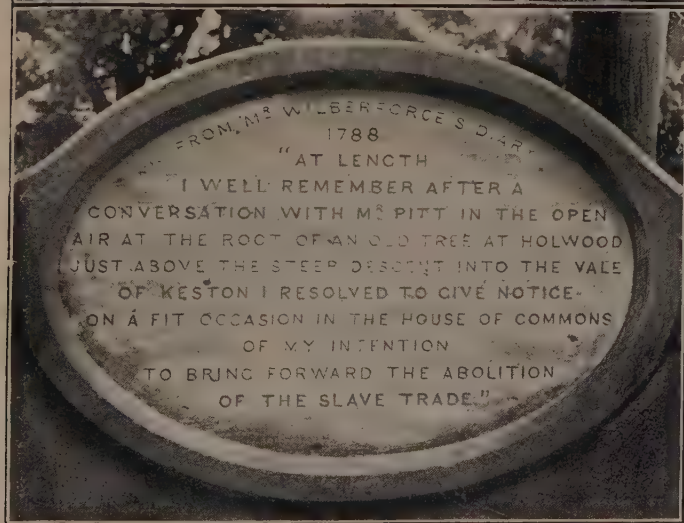
¹ A still earlier committee is mentioned in the *Life of William Allen*. It met in 1783, with the aim of enlightening the public mind, and consisted of William Dillwyn, George Harrison, Samuel Hoare, Thomas Knowles, M.D., John Lloyd, and Joseph Woods.

scorched by the sun in the day, and chilled by the dews in the night.'

The two did not meet to discuss the slave trade now. Newton's letters, written while he was captain of a slave-ship, are not pleasant reading. They tell of the slaves conspiring, but also of his ecstasies of devotion; they show the delusive possibilities that may beset a spirit which awakes to a life of religious emotion without understanding the law of service. Newton lived to loathe the trade, and published his protest against the mischiefs he had seen. It may still be read in his epitaph, the line of sad remembrance which he wrote of himself—'*Once—A Servant of Slaves in Africa.*'

The life of Wilberforce as he depicts it was not in its first aspects heroic, but the perpetual self-rebuke of his letters and journal is evidence of an aim which triumphed. From his rich and versatile nature as it matured and strengthened came one of the most beneficent influences in England. His personality seems to have been almost a fascination. He was from the first at home with the foremost men, and welcome in all society.

Born in Hull, Wilberforce was but just twenty-one when he was chosen to represent it in parliament. Pitt, born the same year, entered parliament at the same age. Four years later Wilberforce passed by easy transition to be member for Yorkshire; and three years later Pitt became premier. The two young men were almost as brothers. We catch a glimpse of the



THE WILBERFORCE OAK AT KESTON. THE INSCRIPTION ON THE SEAT.

son of Chatham frolicking at Wimbledon in the Wilberforce garden, sowing at sunrise one of the flowerbeds with the fragments of an opera hat; and we see the two making their first visit to Paris, hunting with Louis XVI., at Fontainebleau, and submitting to the chaffing of Marie Antoinette. It is a more memorable occasion when we find them sitting 'at the root of an old tree, in Holwood, just above the steep descent into the valley of Keston,' discussing the slave trade, and Wilberforce rises resolved to bring the subject into parliament. During a protracted tour on the continent with other friends, he had passed through a great inward change; he accounted it the period of his conversion, and came back with a more serious view of duty. He told Pitt that with this change of feeling they might be sometimes separated. Pitt saw how it but qualified him for leadership in the work now rising to the view of the nation.¹

'God Almighty has set before me two great objects,' wrote Wilberforce in his *Journal* (1787)—'the suppression of the slave trade and the reformation of manners.'

Eleven years had passed since Hartley, a former member of Hull, had introduced a motion the purport of which was 'that the slave trade was contrary to the laws of God and to the rights of man'; it made no impression and was forgotten. Burke had sketched out a code of regulations for the mitigation of its evils, and ultimate extinction, but he saw that the West Indian merchants were too strong for him, and did nothing.

¹ See the *Life of William Wilberforce*. By his Sons.

The first step taken now was one of inquiry. A committee of Privy Council was appointed to take into consideration the state of the trade, the manner of obtaining slaves, their importation and sale, and the general results as affecting commerce (1778).¹

The procedure was tedious from the reluctance of witnesses and the embittered attacks of the opposition. Before the examination closed, Wilberforce was prostrated by the failure of health, and his life was for some time in jeopardy. Pitt had promised his friend not to let the matter drop, and to be himself, if necessary, responsible for it; and accordingly after some months brought in a motion pledging the House to a full discussion in the next session, which was agreed to. This was forthwith supplemented by a Bill brought in by Sir William Dolben to ameliorate the conditions of the voyage across the Atlantic, which had been inhuman to a degree, as the evidence showed, which should not be prolonged a single month.

Every slave, whatever his size might be, was found to have only five feet and six inches in length and sixteen inches in breadth to lie in. We take Clarkson himself as authority. The floor was covered with bodies stowed or packed according to this allowance. But between the floor and the deck or ceiling were often platforms or broad shelves in the midway which were covered with bodies also. The height from the floor of the platform seldom exceeded five feet eight inches, and in some cases it did not exceed four feet. The men were chained two and two together by their

¹ See Appendix I.

hands and feet, and were chained also by means of ring bolts, which were fastened to the deck. They were usually fifteen or sixteen hours below deck out of the twenty-four. When Sir William Dolben, as a temporary measure, proposed to apportion five men to every three tons in every ship under one hundred and fifty tons burden, which had five feet between the decks, and three men to two tons in every vessel of a higher burden, there arose a warm dispute.

When the first Bill fell through in the Lords, he prepared and sent up a second, and when that was lost a third, which was pushed forward in hot haste to save the session, and passed at the last moment; but this he set aside in the next session by then producing a better Bill. Nor was that by any means the last attempt at reform.

The next year Wilberforce himself, having recovered strength, brought the whole subject under review, in a speech which held the House for three hours and a half. He described the transportation. 'So much misery condensed in so little room was more than the human imagination had ever before conceived.' As to the alleged comforts of the victims he summoned Death 'as his last witness, whose infallible testimony to their unutterable wrongs can neither be purchased nor repelled.' He spoke of Europe as having been three or four centuries ago as barbarous as Africa, and as chargeable with bad practices. Nothing less than a total abolition of the trade would do away with existing evils. In conclusion, he laid upon the table twelve propositions, one of which was that the slave

trade was destructive to the seamen employed in it,—as others knew it to be a degradation to their manhood,—and the last deduced that ‘no considerable or permanent inconvenience would result from discontinuing the further importation of African slaves’ into the colonies. Burke gave him eloquent support; Pitt said that abolition must be voted, but the procedure first considered; Fox was critical and explicit:—‘With regard to the regulation of the slave trade, he knew of no such thing as the regulation of robbery and murder.’ When the time came for going into Committee, a discussion arose as to the sufficiency of the evidence, and it was arranged that more witnesses should be summoned, and heard at the bar. Before these examinations could be completed the session came to an end.

CHAPTER XXIII

JOHN WESLEY'S LAST LETTER

Savannah was at one period the appointed port of debarkation for negroes in North America. It was not yet so when John Wesley began his career there, but he saw enough of slavery to learn to hate it. We find him, in 1773, denouncing it in a letter as 'infinitely exceeding in every instance of barbarity whatever Christian slaves suffer in Mohammedan countries.' The following year he published a small tractate, *Thoughts on Slavery*, which brought vindictive criticism upon him. When the English committee was formed he was one of the first to offer sympathy and counsel. The last letter he wrote, penned a few days before his death, was addressed to Wilberforce; the quenchless spirit of his own eighty-eight years flames in his words :—

'Feb. 24, 1791.

'My dear Sir—Unless Divine power has raised you up to be as *Athanasius contra mundum*, I see not how you can go through your glorious enterprise, in opposing that execrable villainy which is the scandal of religion, of England, and of human nature. Unless

God has raised you up for this very thing, you will be worn out by the opposition of men and devils ; but if God be for you, who can be against you ? Are all of them together stronger than God ? Oh ! be not weary of well-doing. Go in the name of God and in the power of His might till even American slavery, the vilest that ever saw the sun, shall vanish away before it. That He who has guided you from your youth up may continue to strengthen you in this and all things, is the prayer of, dear Sir, your affectionate servant,

JOHN WESLEY.'

Whitefield, in a letter which he wrote when on the point of sailing for Georgia in 1751, speaks of slavery with but scant reprobation, thinks hot countries cannot be cultivated without negroes, does not approve the trade, but as it exists would purchase negroes to make them comfortable and train them aright. His theory was more at fault than his heart ; it was the view that Christian slave-holders held a century later. Twenty years earlier, on first going out, he had addressed a letter to the inhabitants of Maryland, Virginia, and North and South Carolina, in which he appealed to them to treat their slaves better :—

‘Your dogs are caressed and fondled at your table ; but your slaves, who are frequently styled dogs or beasts, have not an equal privilege. They are scarce permitted to pick up the crumbs which fall from their master’s table. Not to mention that numbers have been given up to the inhuman usage of cruel task-masters, who, by their unrelenting scourges, have

ploughed their backs and made long furrows, and at length brought them even unto death. When passing along I have viewed your plantations cleared and cultivated, many spacious houses built, and the owners of them faring sumptuously every day ; my blood has frequently almost run cold within me, to consider how many of your slaves had neither convenient food to eat, nor proper raiment to put on, notwithstanding most of the comforts you enjoy were solely owing to their indefatigable labours.'

But he had slaves employed in the plantations of the Orphan House he had founded, and left them in his will ; those who came after him added to the number, and so complicated affairs that the Countess of Huntingdon as patron intervened.

The influence exercised by Wesley was to work unseen, and have a greater effect on the cause of freedom than he could have anticipated. The revival of religion, in which he had so large a part, awoke throughout the country a new sense of responsibility. Its impulses passed on into the aggressive societies of the next century, and heartened men against injustice and wrong in every form.

CHAPTER XXIV

TOUSSAINT L'OUVERTURE

THE Danube when the frosts broke and it crashed through the Iron Gates, crumbling the icy masses in its rush, was one of the most impressive sights in Europe. The upheavals of nations are more dread. If we forget the rivalries of empires and peoples, and think only of western Europe as one life, it seems according to nature that after the ages of servitude there should come some wild, unmeasured shout of liberty. After a fight for faith and freedom that gave a Christian meaning to heroism, that voice was heard in the French Revolution. As Motley has instanced in the days before the 'Dutch Republic,' there are times when 'neither the nation in mass, nor the citizens in class, lay claim to human rights.' The first personal claim must have been for security of life and sustenance; the next for possession and protection; but when the whole man awoke, the claim became coextensive with life, and as variable.

'O poor mortals,' exclaims Carlyle, describing the days when the tocsin was ringing and the black-aproned smiths, 'all stroke from head to heel,' were forging arms,

'how ye make this Earth bitter for each other ; this fearful and wonderful Life fearful and horrible ! Great is the moment when tidings of Freedom reach us ; when the long-enthralled soul from amid its chains and squalid stagnancy arises, were it still only in blindness and bewilderment, and swears by Him that made it that it will be *free* ! Free ? Understand that well ; it is the deep commandment, dimmer or clearer, of our whole being, to be *free*.'

When the National Assembly, after slow debate, sent forth its Declaration of the Rights of Man, it began :—

'Men are born and continue free and equal in rights. Social distinctions can be founded only in common utility.

'The end of every political association is the preservation of the natural and imprescriptible rights of man. These rights are liberty, security, and resistance to oppression'—

than which nothing could have more distinctly marked the measure of the change from the world of slavery. These ideals were brought nearer to practical needs when in 1794 the Abbé Grégoire, in the National Convention, proposed and carried the total abolition of slavery. A dream it proved, but it was the bold anticipation of an aim, to achieve which England had then to face a struggle of forty years.

There were wealthy West Indians resident in Paris when the Revolution broke out. As the news crossed the Atlantic it quickened the rivalries of claim which were already becoming formidable in the islands. Spain

no longer held the whole of Hispaniola. The French had taken possession of the south-western shores, and had renamed the whole region San Domingo. An era of prosperity followed, which was disturbed by political contentions. In process of years there had grown up a large body of men of mixed blood ; they coveted equal privileges with the whites, and sent a deputation to Paris to make appeal to the mother country. They carried with them six millions of francs for the service of the State, and offered the fifth of their property in mortgage of the National Debt. The President of the Assembly assured them that no part of the French nation should claim its rights in vain.

Among the members of the Assembly was one of the wealthiest proprietors of San Domingo, who aroused enthusiasm by declaring that he would rather lose all than sacrifice the principles of humanity and justice ; he advocated both the admission of men of colour to the colonial assemblies, and the liberation of the blacks. The right of admission to the assemblies was given by a decree of the French legislature, which was forwarded (1790) to the island. The Haytian representatives had assembled in the name of Louis XVI., and in response they formally declared that all the whites would die rather than share political rights 'with a bastard and degenerate race.' The return of one of the deputation, who insisted on the promulgation of the decree, led to violent conflicts. The deputy was seized and broken on the wheel. The mulattoes were reinforced by two regiments from France. They also appealed to the negroes for help. Then the slaves fell in fury on their

masters ; flame and smoke swept from the mountains to the sea ; and the plantations ran with blood.

It was the beginning of a confused and murderous struggle, which, with some few intervals, lasted for ten years. Its history is memorable by reason of the emergence of a negro slave into the rank of a heroic leader. He is known as Toussaint l'Ouverture ; he was the son of an African chief, lived the ordinary life of servitude, picked up knowledge, and attained to distinction by his valorous deeds ; but he showed the highest qualities, brought discipline to the army, and restored peace to the island. He stopped the slave trade, recognised every man as a free citizen, made commerce also free. The draft of a constitution which he submitted to the First Consul was his promise for the future. The inexorable Bonaparte chose to regard him as a rebellious slave, and sent an expedition to San Domingo. Toussaint was captured by treachery, taken to France, imprisoned in a fortress on the Jura, and left to starve and die—his history another tragedy.¹

Here are a few sentences from a characteristic despatch, which we take from the *Times* of 1801 :—

‘TOUSSAINT L'OUVERTURE TO HIS FELLOW-CITIZENS
IN THE FRENCH PART OF ST. DOMINGO, Feb. 2.

‘Citizens—It is with great satisfaction I inform you that I have taken possession of the Spanish part of St. Domingo in the name of the French Republic. . . . The measures of prudence and humanity which I have

¹ Beard's *Life of Toussaint l'Ouverture*.

taken prevented the effusion of blood ; and with very little loss I have put myself in possession of the whole island. After the first attack, persuasion was the only means I made use of. My undertaking has been crowned with success. Health and fraternal amity.'

(Signed) 'The General-in-Chief,
'TOUSSAINT LOUVERTURE.'

Wordsworth gave him in his dungeon the sympathy of many generations in those noble lines which link man's failures to the victories that endure :—

Thou has left behind
Powers that will work for thee ; air, earth, and skies ;
There's not a breathing of the common wind
That will forget thee ; thou hast great allies ;
Thy friends are exultations, agonies,
And love, and man's unconquerable mind.

CHAPTER XXV

ZACHARY MACAULAY

THERE went forth from the manse of Inveraray, where he was born in 1768, one Zachary Macaulay, who was sent at fourteen to a merchant's office in Glasgow, and two years later despatched to Jamaica, where there seemed hope of advancement for him. There, after some disappointments, he obtained a situation as under-manager or book-keeper on a sugar plantation. He found his position 'laborious, irksome, and degrading,' and had to submit to the caprices and tyranny of the overseer; but there he matriculated in the school of suffering, which pointed the way to his future career.

At work among the sugar-canes, Zachary Macaulay saw the wretchedness of the slaves; he heard the resounding whip, and felt himself hardening. His strength failed him; more than once he was brought to the borders of the grave. 'Stretched upon a straw mattress, burning with fever, pining under the want of every necessary comfort, shut out from the sight or converse of any one whom he could call a friend, unable to procure even a cup of cold water for which he did not himself crawl to the neighbouring rivulet,' he yet maintained an

unbroken spirit. Almost had he reconciled himself to this exile as the worst passed over him, and as he began with the brightening of his prospects to make friends, when there came an overture from one of his uncles, inviting him to return to England. He did so, and found refuge at once with his sister, who, during his absence had, through a happy meeting in the Highlands, been led into marriage with Mr. Thomas Babington of Rothley Temple, near Leicester. Zachary had just completed his twenty-first year. There could scarcely have been a greater contrast in his surroundings than was effected by this change.

Mr. Babington was one of a group who had already taken in hand the cause of the negro; the year of young Macaulay's return was the year in which Wilberforce introduced his first motion for the abolition of the slave trade. The company for the colonisation of Sierra Leone was already at work. Henry Thornton, the member of parliament for Southwark, a philosophic banker, the munificent son of a munificent father, had become chairman; Wilberforce was one of its directors, so also Babington; and the prime mover was Granville Sharp, as we have seen. It was not to be supposed that the young man Zachary Macaulay would be allowed, with his experiences, to look on listlessly at these proceedings.

Babington, who set himself to influence the rough, unattractive Zachary, took an early opportunity of sending him out in one of the vessels of the company on a voyage of observation; and not many months after his return he was again sent out, but in a

responsible capacity as second member of council in Sierra Leone. There, at the age of twenty-six, soon after his arrival, he succeeded to the position of governor.¹

The part which Zachary Macaulay had now to take was that of one appointed to an outpost of responsibility and danger. The intrusion of slave-ships was a perpetual peril; it was not diminished by the frequent arrival of privateers, or the appearance of French ships on the horizon. There were the accidents of residence on such a coast to be encountered; sometimes devastating fires, sometimes fevers, so that on one occasion at least there was not a clerk in any of the offices, all the Europeans being down. The questions that had to be decided were often grave. Now fugitive slaves sought freedom within the bounds of the settlement, but had to be refused a resting-place because there was no English law to cover them. Ceaseless vigilance was kept, that the villainies of the slave-dealer might be thwarted; the rum-sellers had also to be watched.

The negroes were restless under civilised laws. Within a year of Macaulay's arrival they rose in insurrection, destroyed the offices and papers of the company, and could only be brought to reason by decisive action. The ringleaders were arrested and sent to England for trial, and an amnesty was granted to their followers.

¹ Our authority for many of the facts which follow is the full and most interesting *Life and Letters of Zachary Macaulay*, by his granddaughter, Viscountess Knutsford. (Arnold.)

A few months later, news came that vessels had been seen to the northward beating down towards the coast. At daylight a few days later they were found at anchor off it ; there were seven of them ; the English colours were discernible, but it soon appeared that they were French and armed. As there were no means of resistance, the governor hung out a flag of truce. Grape and musket shot fell upon his piazza. An American slave-captain, too well known ashore, had piloted them to the place, and in a short time appeared with a band of sans-culottes at the governor's house. Macaulay requested the French officer to give him safe-conduct to the commodore's ship. It was a strange sight which met him on the wharf—the French crews covering their filth and rags with women's clothing, or wrapped in quantities of cloth, and some with six or seven suits of stolen clothes upon them. On board the commodore's ship things were as startling ; in vain the governor reasoned with him ; he professed good-will, but hinted that he could not restrain his men—*Vous êtes Anglais*. The next day Macaulay remained on board the ship. 'The commodore and all his officers messed together, and I was admitted among them.' A 'chorus of boys usher in the dinner with the Marseilles hymn, and it finishes in the same way.'

Freetown, which was the name given to the only town of the settlement, was gutted. Every desk and drawer and shelf of the governor's offices had been ransacked ; the printing-presses destroyed ; the telescopes and thermometers and all instruments ; the books, the papers, the natural history collection ;

nothing was spared. Every house was entered; the live stock ruthlessly slain. The church was devastated, the pulpit broken, the Bible torn. What remained was a few days later given to the flames. For a fortnight the French ships hung about the coast. When they sailed they had destroyed more than four hundred thousand pounds could replace. The colony was in want of every necessary and comfort of life—provisions, tools, household furniture, and much else. It was without arms or ammunition. Only three ships remained to the company, and these were destitute of everything. There was one compensation—almost all the slave-ships on the coast had been destroyed also.

Macaulay faced the calamity with a rare calm. A season of sore sickness followed as one consequence of anxieties and privations that had to be endured; there were many deaths among the people, and much suffering. For some months he bore up against the strain; and it was not till the reorganisation of the colony was near completion that he accepted the invitation of the Court of Directors to return to England, and recruit his strength.

It was indicative of his devotion to the cause he had undertaken that he took passage on board a slave-ship for Barbadoes, that he might see at close quarters the trade, and so by way of the West Indies made the voyage home.

The three years of administration which devolved upon him when he returned to the colony were less disturbed than those which had preceded, but they were scarcely less onerous. He was everything in

turn, from governor to accountant, from Sunday-school teacher to chaplain, according to the exigencies of the time. His vigilance in relation to the slave trade never slackened. Some of the most striking incidents in his diary relate to his dealings with the captains of slave-ships. An American captain was dining with him.

‘I asked him if he did not think the slave trade violated the Divine command. “Yes,” he replied; “that to be sure it does, but then it is only one fault. . . . When I am at home I do a good deal of good to the poor. That will atone for the slave trade. . . . Religion is no doubt a very fine invention, and I think it right to uphold it. I say prayers in my family, I have grace always before and after meat, and I go twice to church on the Sunday. But I have no notion of being righteous overmuch.”’

This was but an extreme illustration of a spirit which from the days of Hawkins, as we have seen, widely prevailed, and which used the shield of a delusive faith to cover enormities of wrong, and so made the obstacles to progress tenfold greater.

When at last the time came round for Macaulay’s return to England, he was worn with toil and harassed by fever; but no sooner had he reached London than he was called to give evidence before the House of Lords on the slave trade. The form of his life now entirely changed, but not its spirit. He did not go back to Africa, but became secretary of the Sierra Leone Company, and for some years lived over their offices in Birchin Lane. He brought home from the tropics his habit of rising early—four o’clock was

his hour during the anti-slavery struggle—and was accustomed to dip a match in a bottle of phosphorus, and light his own fire. His energies broke forth in new directions. Long-stifled tastes and desires found now their opportunity. Even in Sierra Leone he had taken an interest in Hannah More's cheap Repository Tracts. Now he joined the founders of the Religious Tract Society. He had a considerable part in the early counsels of the Church Missionary Society, and of the Bible Society. He launched the Society for Bettering the Condition of the Poor, the Society for the Suppression of Vice, and the Merchant Seamen's Bible Society; and these were not his only undertakings. More than all were the strenuous labours which made him one of the most valuable allies in the conflict against slavery now waging.

CHAPTER XXVI

THE STRUGGLE IN PARLIAMENT

IT was one of the greater struggles of history that was now begun, without the marshalling of armies, or the glamour of ambition. The trade assailed was rooted in long custom : it seemed to have become a vital part of commerce, it had been fostered by the concert of nations, it had been held as a spoil of war, and exclusively controlled, at least for a term, by the British Government ; immense wealth and the interests of multitudes of people were now concerned in it. The shifting conditions of the western world must ultimately have interposed an interruption ; but new relations had been created, the most frightful abuses were now in full possession, and they cried for instant change.

For eighteen years, from the first step to the last, which brought abolition, through many delays and vicissitudes, the contest was protracted, Wilberforce leading with unfaltering aim. ‘ These Utopian schemes of liberty in the slave trade,’ wrote Dr. Parr, ‘ alarm serious men.’ Gibbon, who looked back on the political fields he had once occupied, from Lausanne,



THOMAS CLARKSON.

where he saw the fugitives of the French Revolution seeking refuge, wrote asking what 'this rage against slavery' meant? 'Was there no leaven of new democratical spirit' (in the petitions against the slave trade), 'no wild idea of the rights and equality of man?' Long afterwards, when slavery was nearer to dying, another historian saw with different eyes. 'It is perfectly easy,' wrote Dr. Arnold, 'to say we will have no slaves. It is not quite so easy to make all the human inhabitants of a country what free citizens ought to be.'

One of the first acts of Clarkson, after the formation of the abolition committee, was to visit Bristol and Liverpool, and search out every track which might lead to full knowledge of the existing trade. It was a difficult and sometimes dangerous work. He found much to inflame his zeal; it was not long before he came upon the proofs of crime, and the suggestions even of murder, but those who knew most were reluctant witnesses. Many a toilsome hour was spent on these investigations by the little band who had given themselves to this cause. Wilberforce was in the hey-day of his career; Pitt and his friends dining with him before the House; strangers crowding to breakfast; his privacy challenged at every moment; the abolition committee dined with him once a week; many a evening was devoted to their one chief object. His proposal the next session was a special committee for the further examination of witnesses, and he himself conducted the examinations, which were protracted over some months.

In the autumn we find him sifting the evidence while sojourning at a country house. 'Mr. Wilberforce and Mr. Babington,' writes a friend who was there, 'have never appeared downstairs since we came, except to take a hasty dinner, or for half an hour after we have supped; the slave trade now occupies them nine hours daily. Mr. Babington told me last night that he had 1400 folio pages to read, to detect the contradictions, and to collect the answers which corroborate Mr. Wilberforce's assertions in his speeches; these, with more than 2000 papers to be abridged, must be done within a fortnight. They talk of sitting up one night in each week to accomplish it. The two friends begin to look very ill, but are in excellent spirits. . . . Food, beyond what is absolutely necessary for his existence, seems quite given up. He has a very slight breakfast, a plain and sparing dinner, and no more that day, except some bread about ten o'clock.'

In the following spring, Wilberforce joined battle by moving the Immediate Abolition of the Slave Trade. His speech was a comprehensive review of the evidence. Pitt sat next him, and looked after his papers. 'On every view,' ran his conclusion, 'it becomes Great Britain to be forward in the work. One half of this guilty commerce has been conducted by her subjects, and as we have been great in crime, let us be early in repentance. There will be a day of retribution wherein we shall have to give account of all the talents, faculties, and opportunities which have been entrusted to us. Let it not then appear that our superior power has been employed to oppress our

fellow-creatures, and our superior light to darken the creation of our God.' 'Never, never, never will we desist,' were among his closing words, 'till we have extinguished this traffic.'

The debate ranged over two evenings. Burke and Fox and Pitt were again among the speakers, Fox with impassioned force, as he made the House quiver by his recitals of wrong. The speeches dealt mainly with the facts of the evidence. Allusion was made to the surplus negroes, sold sometimes for a dollar or left to a lingering death. The case was mentioned of a ship caught on the sands of Jamaica, the crew of which, fearing lest provisions should fail, killed between three and four hundred negroes, and of their cargo saved only thirty-three, who were sold at Kingston. The proven facts would make a catalogue of wrongs which few to-day would care to read. The severities of pagan times cannot be softened ; but the mean, greedy, vengeful, and often secret cruelties now disclosed had an infamy of their own—the treachery of capture, the cramped, suffocating weeks of the voyage, breeding corruption and death, the perpetual irons, the dripping lash, the general misery.

In Pitt's speech was a passage of prophetic hope which greatly impressed his compeers, and is still remembered. As the rising sun shot through the windows of the House, he pictured the beams of a new day breaking upon the Dark Continent.

'Then may we hope that even Africa, though last of all the quarters of the globe, shall enjoy at length, in the evening of her days, those blessings which have

descended so plentifully upon us in a much earlier period of the world. Then also will Europe, participating in her improvement and prosperity, receive an ample recompense for the tardy kindness, if kindness it can be called, of no longer hindering that continent from extricating herself out of the darkness which, in other more fortunate regions, has been so much more speedily dispelled.' And unpremeditated came the quotation¹ :—

Nos . . . primus equis Oriens afflavit anhelis,
Illic sera rubens accendit lumina Vesper.

The motion for immediate abolition was rejected by 163 votes to 88. Subsequently a motion for gradual abolition was carried.

The blood-red stamp of history shows faded and dim on many a page, and so we think of the Middle Passage as a story of squalor and shame better forgotten. When Wilberforce was speaking it was a daily experience. The facts must be noted if we would realise the lengths to which commercial greed may carry a people, or measure the strength of the resolve which was now shaping to abolish these evils, whatever the opposition. 'One captain, an adverse witness, had maintained that slaves lay during the night in tolerable comfort. And yet he confessed that in a vessel of one hundred and twenty tons, in which he had carried 290 slaves, the latter had not all of them room to lie on their backs. How comfortably then must they have lain in his subsequent voyages,

¹ Lord Stanhope's *Life of Pitt*.

for he carried afterwards in a vessel of a hundred and eight tons, 450, and in a vessel of one hundred and fifty tons, no less than 600 slaves.' In another case, a ship of three hundred and seventy tons, which carried 602 slaves, lost 155. There were three or four other vessels in company with her, belonging to the same owners. One of these carried 450, and buried 200; another carried 466, and buried 73; another 546, and buried 158: and from the four together, after the landing of their cargoes, 220 died.¹

Another body of facts dealt with the manner of obtaining the negroes. Nowhere was there the slightest trace of a sane and voluntary emigration. They were gathered in depots, near the mouths of rivers, by every kind of violence and fraud. 'In the rivers of Calabar and Bonny, for instance, it was usual,² when the slave ships lay there, for a number of canoes to go into the inland country. These went in a fleet. There might be from thirty to forty armed natives in each of them. Every canoe had also a four or six-pounder fastened to its bow. They were usually absent from eight to fourteen days. It was said they went to fairs which were held on the banks, and where there was a regular show of slaves. On their return they usually brought down from eight hundred to a thousand of these for the ships. They lay, bound arms and legs, at the bottom of the canoes.' Clarkson, in endeavouring to trace the truth, boarded as many as forty English vessels in

¹ For an account of the wholesale murder perpetrated on the ship 'Zong,' see Appendix II.

² Clarkson's *History of the Slave Trade*.

different places, and at last found a man who had taken part in some of these expeditions. There were no fairs, but they attacked villages, and carried off men, women, and children.

The negro question was seen in another light when the state of affairs in San Domingo became generally known. There came news, too, of insurrections in Martinique and the smaller French islands; and a little later of one in our own island of Dominica. When the French found themselves unable to cope with the English naval force, they allowed an emissary to foment rebellion.

CHAPTER XXVII

THE SLAVE TRADE 'ABOLISHED'

THE speeches in parliament served to inform the country; the overwhelming majority which rejected abolition aroused it. Bridgwater had been the first to petition; now from all parts of the kingdom petitions came, more than five hundred of them. Meetings were held and feeling grew strong. 'The clergy to a man are favourable to the cause,' wrote a friend in Scotland. 'The people have taken up the matter in the view of duty and religion, and do not inquire what any man or set of men think of it.' This, too, was the strength of the movement in England. Large numbers refused to use West Indian sugar as a produce of slave labour, as many at one time as three hundred thousand persons. But this gathering feeling was held in check by events on the continent.

Scarcely had England rallied from the loss of her American colonies when she was confronted by subversive forces which Europe knew not how to measure. The alarm which Gibbon had expressed became general. The partisans of the slave trade surrendered to it, and were loud in proclaiming that this new

interest in the negro was a revolutionary cry. The outbreak in San Domingo gave a semblance of reason to their fears. The king himself frowned on the policy of abolition, and from that time opposed it. Wilberforce stood unshaken; Clarkson and his friends laboured unceasingly. But the elements of confusion and discontent, combined with the germinating of new ideas, occasioned much disquietude.

There were signs of commotion in Yorkshire. The West Riding gathered for a public meeting; the clothiers on their ponies poured into York; no one knew what might be at hand. Pitt lent Wilberforce his carriage; with four horses attached and two outriders to clear the road, he dashed northward, reached the city amidst the acclamations of thousands, pushed through the tumult to the stone steps of the Castle Yard, and from them addressed the largest assemblage of gentlemen and freeholders ever met in Yorkshire. His speech against sedition told throughout the country.

The courage of the man was equal to greater occasions. He had watched the prolongation of the war against France with the feeling that while all precautions were taken the French people should be left free to determine their own form of government. In 1795 he had moved an amendment to the Address in favour of peace. 'When I first went to the levée after moving my amendment the king cut me.' His trouble had been that this step, taken after deliberate argument with Pitt, was in opposition to his life-long friend.

The war afterwards broke in upon the slave trade question in ways not anticipated. The general policy of Pitt led to a blow being struck in the West Indies, and the acquisition of new territories there, which created fresh demands for negroes.

At last there came a time when the whole thought of the nation was concentrated on the threatened invasion of Napoleon, and the very life of England, and all that pertained to it, seemed in suspense.

Through such tumultuous times only a resolute purpose could have prevailed. No hesitating policy could hope to weave to a successful issue the rugged influences that were now at work. There was one great fact of encouragement—in the existence of a newly formed body of opinion, while the conviction spread and deepened that this was a sacred task from which there could be no receding. On one occasion, when a member had expressed a wish that the question could be postponed till the return of peace, Wilberforce exclaimed, ‘The question suspended! Is the desolation of wretched Africa suspended? Are all the complicated miseries of this atrocious trade—is the work of death suspended? No, sir, I call upon the House not to insult the forbearance of Heaven by delaying this tardy act of justice.’

From year to year the procedure was modified as seemed necessary or expedient. The Houses having accepted the principle of gradual abolition, first with vague discussion, and then with the year 1800 in view, Wilberforce and his friends succeeded in securing a majority for January 1, 1795, as the date; but

when the matter came before the House of Lords, they insisted in calling evidence to their own bar, and the issue was again postponed. Successive debates but little changed the relation of opinions in parliament; sometimes at an early stage, and sometimes at a later the abolitionists were beaten. A motion to restrict the number of slaves to be annually imported into our own colonies was rejected; and so also another which would have prevented British merchants from supplying foreigners with slaves. A project for confining the trade within certain limits was also set aside. Wilberforce had called upon parliament 'to suppress the greatest, the most complicated, the most extensive evil by which the human race had ever been afflicted'; and the further inquiry went the more cause there seemed for his words. He was sorely troubled when an address to the Crown was carried which would have transferred to the legislative bodies of the different colonies the task of preparing for abolition, and so placed the question in the hands of its bitterest opponents.

When one disappointment followed another, the friends of the movement, recognising the difficulties that beset the West Indian proprietors, endeavoured to win their concurrence in limiting the duration of the trade to five or at most seven years. The negotiations were protracted but fruitless. The times could scarcely have been less propitious for a settlement. The awful scenes transpiring in Hayti were mixed with the revolutionary changes of Paris in such a way as to alarm men. With the return of peace between

England and France in 1802, the idea of a European combination for the suppression of the trade began to be discussed. Denmark had set a good example, having in her own case allowed a term of ten years to bring it to a close. Norway had taken a similar course.

Twice had the House of Commons declared against the slave trade ineffectually, when Wilberforce in 1804, brought in his Bill again, and with triumphant majorities carried it from stage to stage, only for the third time to experience a check, the lateness of the session making it impossible to go forward in the House of Lords. When, in 1805, he brought his measure on once more, the omens had changed, and he lost the second reading by a small majority. 'Great canvassing of our enemies, and several of our friends absent through forgetfulness, or accident, or engagements preferred from lukewarmness.'

'I never felt so much on any parliamentary occasion,' he wrote in his *Journal*. 'I could not sleep, after first waking at night. The poor blacks rushed into my mind and the guilt of our wicked land.' His private reflections on the Sunday following show his heart's heart, as he ends:—'O Lord, purify me. I do not, God be merciful to me, deserve the signal honour of being the instrument of putting an end to this atrocious and unparalleled wickedness. But, O Lord, let me earnestly pray Thee to pity these children of affliction, and to terminate their unequalled wrongs: and O direct and guide me in this important conjuncture, that I may act so as may be most agreeable to Thy will. Amen.'

No two lives could have been more unlike in outward circumstances than those of John Woolman and William Wilberforce, but their parallelism is remarkable in the spirit that remakes social conditions. No solitary à Kempis could more scrupulously have watched his days than did Wilberforce in the midst of affairs. He not only kept the one day in seven for distinctly religious purposes, but sought throughout his busiest years to set apart an hour morning and night ; his self-judgments, if excessive, were humble and did not nurture that self-regard which is weakness, for he lived in the service of others, with rare opportunity beckoning him to their aid. Prayer was his refuge in all difficulties. The conscience thus kept vivid found a large sphere : it led him to political independence, it gave him political courage, it determined his actions on all sorts of questions during a long career. It set up a standard in public life, the moral superiority of which was recognised by strangely opposite natures.

The death of Pitt broke in upon the course of affairs at this crisis. The world said that Austerlitz killed him, and the saying illustrates the tremendous influences that were now at work, affecting all issues. A letter written at the moment strikingly illustrates Wilberforce's own range. 'Mr. Pitt had foibles, and of course they were not diminished by so long a continuance in office ; but for a clear and comprehensive view of the most complicated subject in all its relations ; for that fairness of mind which disposes a man to follow out and when overtaken to recognise the truth ; for magnanimity, which made him ready to change his

measures when he thought the good of the country required it, though he knew he should be charged with inconsistency on account of the change ; for willingness to give a fair hearing to all that could be urged against his own opinions, and to listen to the suggestions of men whose understandings he knew to be inferior to his own ; for personal purity, disinterestedness, integrity and love of his country,—I have never known his equal.’

The Wilberforce conscience appears in his endeavour to get ‘poor Pitt’s debts’ paid by private contributions, lest the payment by a vote of parliament should be made a precedent.

With the change of ministry, the long controversy entered quickly into a new phase. For one thing, with the revival of war, and the new imperialism, the fear of revolutionary doctrine had abated. Pitt had denounced the slave trade as ‘the deepest stain on our national character and the most enormous guilt recorded in the history of mankind’; but its removal was not the first object of his policy. Lord Grenville and Fox had not been many months in office, when two subsidiary Bills were passed, one prohibiting the export of slaves from the British colonies, and interdicting British subjects from taking part in the supply of foreign countries ; another prohibiting the employment of any additional ships in the trade. Then Fox himself proposed a resolution pledging the House to effectual measures for the suppression of the traffic ; and on a division there were only fifteen found against one hundred and fourteen in its favour. Lord Grenville carried the same resolution in the

House of Lords. An address from the two Houses besought the king to take steps for obtaining the concurrence of foreign Powers. Pitt had previously communicated with Lafayette as to the possibility of action with France. Fox's resolution may be said to have closed his public career ; probably no subject lay nearer to his generous heart. Before the year had closed, death had claimed him also.

A dissolution of Parliament soon followed. At the commencement of the next session Lord Grenville himself introduced a Bill for the abolition into the House of Lords. Two cabinet ministers and two royal dukes were still among its opponents. So completely had the position changed that in a month's time it had passed through the successive stages into the House of Commons, where the second reading was carried by a majority of 283 to 16. It fell to Wilberforce, by order of the House, to carry the amended Bill back to the Lords. There it was finally passed, on March 23, 1807. Lord Grenville congratulated the House 'upon the completion of one of the most glorious tasks ever performed for the public benefit.' Sir Samuel Romilly, as the debate was drawing to a close in the Commons, had contrasted Napoleon's career of destruction with Wilberforce's course, the one as newly crowned emperor receiving the homage of kings and princes, the other 'an object of just envy to the most ambitious of mortals'—surprising the whole House into loud acclamations of sympathy. But that minority of sixteen was representative of immense obstacles yet to be overcome.

How slowly the world moves appeared three years later when a Portuguese vessel was discovered to have been secretly fitted in the Thames as a slave-ship, to carry from six to eight hundred slaves. It was seized, and on board were found ninety-three pairs of handcuffs, one hundred and ninety-seven iron shackles for the feet, several hundredweights of iron chains, and fifty-five dozen of padlocks with other things.

The same year it was reported to the African Institution that at the taking of Guadaloupe about 300 black soldiers in the French service were made prisoners, and that they were afterwards distributed on board the ships of the squadron, and sold as prize goods at Martinique for the benefit of the army and navy!

CHAPTER XXVIII

PIRACY IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

WHEN the power of Napoleon seemed broken, and Wellington took part in the deliberations of the Allied Powers at Paris, one of the points which as English ambassador he urged upon the restored Louis XVIII. was the suppression of the slave trade. The British Government had realised the need of concerted action to carry forward the work with such difficulty begun, and he was empowered to offer an immediate advance of £3,000,000 as compensation to the French planters in the West Indies, or, alternately, the free cession of the island of Trinidad, on condition that the traffic in slaves should be abolished at once. Spain was more under his influence, for she received an annual subsidy of which £800,000 remained due on the instalment for that year, and the payment was to be made conditional on the immediate and absolute cessation of the trade.¹

Before these questions could be settled Napoleon reappeared from Elba. It was one of the surprises of the Hundred Days that he decreed the abolition of

¹ See Maxwell's *Life of the Duke of Wellington*.

the slave trade in France ; and when, after Waterloo, the king was once more reinstated, it was agreed that this decree should retain its force. When the Congress met at Vienna the piracy of the Barbary States was mentioned, as calling for the joint interference of the European Powers. It was alleged that Algiers then held 49,000 white slaves—captives made by piracy or their descendants.

From the time when Delos became the slave market of Greece, and thousands of kidnapped or captive men, women, and children were sold there in a day, piracy and slavery were, as we have seen, inextricably mingled in the Mediterranean. In the first of the famous sieges of Rhodes, the pirates were a division of the attacking fleet. Rhodes at another period essayed, as Athens had once done, to clear the sea of pirates, and its ships became famous for the skill won in these pursuits. When the mercenary forces of the Asiatic monarchs were disbanded, and the Greek power was broken before the Roman, the pirates seized some of the largest and wealthiest cities, and plundered the temples. When one of the sons of the famous Pompey was invested with extraordinary powers over the whole Mediterranean to exterminate them, he captured ninety of their brazen-beaked ships, and 20,000 prisoners.¹ Not only the southern coasts of Asia Minor, but northern Africa were favourite haunts. The traditions of slave-holding Carthage long survived.

In the days when Blake was in the Mediterranean,

¹ Finlay's *History of Greece*.

the seizure of some English ships by pirates of Tunis led to his demanding their restitution, together with the instant release of all the English captives. They professed respect for the English flag, but would not give back the prizes they held. Blake drew out of sight; waited his opportunity, and when he had lulled the Tunisians into security, he returned, fell upon them, burned their corsair ships and broke their power. Then he sailed for Tripoli and exacted a treaty. When he appeared before Algiers the Dey pleaded that the ships and men captured had become private property, and could not be recovered without risk to the general peace,—this was the plea the pirates had urged to Charles V,—and he asked for a moderate ransom, pledging himself and his people in return not to molest English traders for all time to come. Blake consented to this arrangement. One pleasant incident of those six months of 1655 is told by Hepworth Dixon in his *Life of Blake*.

‘The ships were lying inshore, not far from the mole-head, when a number of men were observed swimming towards them, pursued by several turbaned Moors in boats; and on coming under the bows of our vessels, the fugitives cried to the sailors in Dutch to save them from their Moslem pursuers. Forgetting that only a few months before they had been at war with their countrymen, regardless of every consideration beyond the human instincts of the moment, the sailors helped the poor wretches to clamber up, when they discovered that they were runaway slaves, and the men in chase of them their masters. Here, then, was a new

difficulty ! The Dey claimed the fugitives in virtue of the new treaty, and appealed to the accepted principle of compensation for all restored captives. But the idea of giving back Christian men, even enemies, from the freedom of an English man-of-war into the hands of pirates and infidels was not to be entertained by Puritan sailors. Someone suggested to his fellows a subscription ; how much the admiral himself paid into this fund he has carefully concealed, but every seaman in the fleet generously agreed to give up a dollar of his wages to buy the poor Hollanders their freedom. A bargain was soon made, the money was paid by the fleet-treasurer, and the liberated men went home to tell their countrymen this story of the magnanimous islanders.'

Blake also drove off the French pirates who hovered round the Balearic Isles.

The chivalry of the Knights of Malta was no ideal cloth of pure gold to wrap them : it was blotched with much common earth, and covered many scandals. The tragedy of individual life sometimes blended strangely in their history. Leo Strozzi, a young Florentine knight, who had become Prior of Capua, gave up that dignity to avenge the death of his father, who had been thrown into prison for opposing the emperor, and died in his dungeon by his own hand. Leo went over to the service of France, achieving high distinction, and rising to be admiral of the fleet ; then, in a fiery mood, resigned his command. As the history runs, he found himself cruising in the Mediterranean without any

means of refitting his ships, and 'driven to acts of piracy in self-support.' For some time 'he became the scourge of the Mediterranean under the peculiar title assumed by himself, of the Friend of God alone,'—which probably was his note of defiance against the Powers dividing Europe, with whom he had quarrelled. After some rebuffs he was admitted into the ranks of the Order at Malta, where he again rose to the highest places; he was on the point of being elected Grand Master, but the wisest spirits feared the use he might make of his power; then in anger he resigned his command of the galleys of the Order, and set sail on 'a private adventure,' with some of the younger Knights.

Yet the Knights of Malta were regarded as one of the scourges of piracy; again and again they chastised Turkish slave-ships with a strong hand. Letters from both Charles II. and Anne remain in which the Knights are thanked. In one of the expeditions despatched by Charles, fifty Knights were rescued at Tripoli, and returned to their homes. But the Knights had their own views of slavery. They made of Malta a slave-mart, set up a dungeon within the convent, and scoured the seas to keep it supplied with infidel captives. These they sold. For thirty-five Turks whom an English sailor had betrayed to them, they asked from the English Government, who wished to repair the wrong, a ransom of £10,000. The Kings of France and Spain drew annually upon them; Charles II., wishing to keep some galleys in the Mediterranean, became a purchaser, and protested against the customs demand of five pieces of gold. The unhappy wretches,

whom the Knights kept chained to the oar, fared badly. A Moslem slave, who had obtained his release, went to Constantinople, persuaded the sultan to let him have ten ships, and returned to Malta intent on raising the slaves in insurrection, but the plot was discovered. It led to a proposal for giving freedom to the captives by an exchange of Moslem and Christian, but that also fell through. Twenty years later a negro of active brain hatched another conspiracy; a general massacre was planned; but a quarrel led to the treacherous betrayal of the plot, and sixty of the conspirators suffered death. Almost to the last the Knights were served by slaves, many of whom were better treated than they would have been in their own countries. The famous ramparts of Valetta were raised by slave labour.¹

Down to the nineteenth century the northern coast of Africa retained its evil reputation. The commerce of all nations was affected by Algerine piracy. In 1815 the United States Government summarily exacted compensation and guarantees. The next spring Lord Exmouth, with a British squadron, obtained from the Deys of Algiers, Tunis, and Tripoli the liberation of nearly 2000 slaves and promises of forbearance towards the minor European states. He had returned and disbanded his crew, when an outrage by Algerian soldiery on some coral fishers, under our protection, was followed up by the seizure of the British consul. The admiral was ordered to refit and return, and

¹ *The Knights of Malta*, by Major Whitworth Porter. See also Gardiner's *History of the Commonwealth*.

went accompanied by a Dutch squadron. When he presented himself again before Algiers he demanded the entire and immediate abolition of Christian slavery. An obstinate fight ensued, with terrible slaughter on either side ; the bombardment lasted for seven hours, and not till the city was almost destroyed did the Dey surrender. Then a thousand and eighty-three more captives were brought up from the interior and released.

After Napoleon's irruption and his exile to St. Helena, the diplomatists, when they met at Aix-la-Chapelle, had one figure amongst them who attracted the hopes of the abolitionists. This was the Emperor Alexander of Russia, whose ideality some revered, whose ambitions some dreaded. It was hoped that he might favour a proposal to declare the slave trade piracy. The zealous Clarkson, who had spent his energies so lavishly in the cause, and fallen out from the struggle when it was but begun, was now again active, and was despatched to the scene, where he obtained an interview with the emperor, and in a long conversation made him acquainted with the facts ; but all that he could report was that Alexander expressed his concurrence in the desire to extinguish the trade. In the full council of diplomatists Russia suggested the establishment by the Powers of a tribunal on the African coast, but nothing of any kind was done beside addressing a letter to the King of Portugal, asking him to fix a date of prohibition for his own subjects.

At the second congress of Vienna (1822) the Duke of Wellington used all his influence to secure a settlement. Its sessions were transferred to Verona. The Quaker, William Allen, was anxious to obtain an audience of the emperors. The story has been told by Gleig, the chaplain-general, apparently on the authority of the duke,¹ how one morning Allen approached him.

‘Friend,’ said he, ‘I must go to Verona.’

‘Impossible, I’m afraid,’ replied the duke. ‘Have not you seen the order that nobody is to be allowed to enter the town unless he is a member of one of the embassies?’

‘Friend, I must go to Verona, and thou must enable me to do so.’

‘How can I do that? You don’t hold any office and I have none to give you.’

‘Friend,’ persisted the Quaker, ‘I must go to Verona, and thou must carry me thither.’

‘Well,’ returned the amused duke, ‘if I must, I must. If you like to ride as one of my couriers, you may do so.’

This incident is not related by Allen himself in his journal, but there are entries that make it probable. At Munich the Austrian ambassador, acting under general orders, refused to sign his passport for Verona. The British minister then took the matter in hand, and sent him a special passport as ‘Courier to the Duke of Wellington,’ and countersigned by the Austrian minister, explaining that it was the only way of getting

¹ Maxwell’s *Life of the Duke of Wellington*.

over the difficulty. A few days later there was a scarcity of horses in the Tyrol, the imperial party being in front. 'I was obliged,' writes Allen, 'to submit to have the letter-bag fastened on to my carriage, and as horses are so scarce it is on the whole an advantage.' The possessor of a horseless carriage refused to allow him to proceed. 'The driver said I was a courier; he said I was not. I quietly beckoned him to come to the side of the carriage, when I showed him the official character in which the British minister at Munich had placed me, and he immediately gave way.'

At Vienna Allen had already seen the Emperor of Russia, and had had several talks with the Duke of Wellington. At Verona he met the emperor again, and other high personages. Wilberforce had previously published an open letter to Alexander, which had been distributed among the parliamentary deputies of several countries. He sent across by Allen a private letter to the emperor; and Clarkson, remembering his interview at Aix-la-Chapelle, also wrote. Allen's chief object was to show the grounds for declaring the slave trade piracy; but his interviews ranged over other subjects dear to his heart. As we follow him we become aware of a mild, persuasive voice, audible under the clashing of time; the duke talks freely with him; the emperor enfolds him with intimate confidences. Clarkson had shared his house in Plough Court; but in this throng of statesmen the sagacious Quaker seems himself a citizen of the world. As to piracy, Wellington's explanation was that the Congress was not a sufficiently

comprehensive body to enforce a decision, and that against the opposition of France there could be no appeal but war. General Macaulay, Zachary's brother, had been sent direct from London to represent the cause, and remained at Verona after Allen left. The utmost reached, after full discussion, was a resolution condemning the slave trade as culpable and unlawful, and engaging the Powers to do all they could to hasten its abolition. Two years later, in 1824, it was declared piracy by Great Britain; and so by Russia, Austria, and Prussia in 1841; and by other states at various intervals.

Not till the West African Conference at Berlin, in 1882, was the united voice of Europe heard declaring it contrary to international law. Then the plenipotentiaries of fifteen Powers signed the Declaration, one of whom represented the United States, and another, let it be noted, the flagrant offender, Turkey.

From Algiers, with its easy hinterland from which to draw, there continued for many years a slave trade, half disguised, which supplied Constantinople and the East. Nothing has done so much, not even the tradition of Lord Exmouth, for the suppression of this evil, as the French occupation of Algiers and the Italian influence over Tripoli.

CHAPTER XXIX

WEST INDIAN RULE

ROBERT Browning's father was sent when a youth to begin life in Jamaica, as was the young Zachary Macaulay, whose brilliant son in after years also eclipsed the father. Browning found that his work involved a recognition of slavery, gave it up, and returned to England, where his father refused him admission to the old home and demanded from him in his anger payment back for his wasted education.¹ The attitude of this young lad shows a mood which was not uncommon. The narrative of a book-keeper, who returned and described what he had seen, had great effect, as many as 200,000 copies being sold in a fortnight. The accomplished James Stephen, who rendered so many and great services to the cause after he came back to England, practised for eleven years at the bar in St. Christopher, and while there, breaking from custom, would never hold a slave.

Not a few Englishmen, when the question of emancipation arose, set free their hereditary bondmen, and risked their own livelihood by the act.

¹ Chesterton's *Browning*.

One case is recorded which should not pass out of memory, where an old man of nearly eighty, named Steele, having large estates in Barbadoes, which did not pay, went out himself to inaugurate another system. He abolished the whip, gave a small wage, and, as things improved, registered his slaves as copyholders, giving each his share of land, and fixing as rent a proportion of labour. For ten years he watched the scheme prosper by which he substituted law and contract for a tyranny of toil.¹

The West Indian merchants included many grades, and were not all to be branded with the mark of shame. It was said of their slaves, as it was said of the American plantations, that they were 'infinitely better off' than half the peasantry of Europe, for these dark peoples, living in the sunshine, called to labour and not to think, can smile and laugh and sing with quick gaiety of childhood. Their case was rendered worse by the large number of absentee proprietors, who delegated their power often to reckless men.

'The dreadful stories recited to the committee,' seriously pleaded a speaker in one of the slave-trade debates, 'ought no more to fix a general stigma on the planters than the story of Mrs. Brownrigg ought to stamp this metropolis with the general brand of murder. There had been a haberdasher's wife who locked up her apprentice girl and starved her to death, but did anybody ever think of abolishing haberdashery on that account? He was persuaded that the negroes in the West Indies were in general cheerful and happy. They

¹ Clarkson on *Improving the Condition of the Slaves* (1823).

were fond of ornaments, and he appealed to the observation of every gentleman whether it was the characteristic of miserable persons to show a fondness for finery?'¹

Did ever nation struggle into history with fetters so heavy as bound these negro slaves? They, in their western beginning, had no family bonds to help them; they knew nothing of the strength of clanship, had no tribal inspiration, no common aims, no common faith, not even a common language, no choice, no educating individuality of purpose. They were gathered at the first from villages far apart; the few that knew each other were separated, they were mixed and remixed in an awful conglomerate of what appeared to be soulless humanity. They were torn from their native customs and set to alien tasks, with the whip as measuring rod. How dire the confusion may be gathered from the fact that, after Sierra Leone had become a refuge for rescued slaves, there were found at one time representatives of more than a hundred tribes, almost all speaking different languages or dialects.

In the settlement of groups so heterogeneous, sold and resold, it was almost inevitable that a system of severity should spring up and rule; it seems the more likely when we remember what the criminal usage of Europe then was,—what the prisons, before Howard and Mrs. Fry began their work,—and that in England, to take one instance, the death penalty, though evaded, remained attached to two hundred and sixty offences.

¹ Quoted in *The Speaker*.

The spirit which made the slave, and was in all times reckless of life and unpitying, governed his history to the last. If the man who became a slave lost, as old Homer thought, the half of his manhood, the man who became a master lost not unfrequently the whole, as even the ancients testified.

An almost ferocious tone characterised much early legislation. The *Code Noir* of the French colonies, in 1724, ordained that the slaves of different masters caught assembling by day or night should be whipped or branded with *fleur-de-lys*; and in case of frequent transgressions, suffer death. The penalty for striking a master, so as to cause a bruise or 'effusion of blood'—a black eye, shall we say, or a bloody nose?—was death. A runaway slave, absent a month, might have his ears cut off, or be hamstrung, or branded. Under the British Government, by an Act of Virginia, approved by Anne of monopoly fame, anyone might kill runaway slaves who had been proclaimed 'by such ways as they thought fit.' Iron collars were often worn, with spikes affixed. In Jamaica a runaway slave might have one foot cut off after thirty days' absence. Runaway slaves not claimed became the king's, and might be sold in support of the government. No wonder the maroons or runaway negroes of the hills and woods were a formidable band in any war.

It was thought that the staying of the 'savage inflow,' as some called this immigration of negroes, might make it easier to introduce measures of amelioration. For some little time the trade in slaves took the form of smuggling. A Bill introduced by Brougham

in 1811, and carried through both Houses of Parliament, made slave-trading a felony, and for the milder penalties of fine and forfeiture made the offender liable to fourteen years' transportation, or imprisonment for five years. This check was more effective at home than in the colonies. It was followed by a proposal for the registration of slaves. Stephen, who knew the islands, brought his large experience and vigorous powers to bear on this project, regarding it as the best protection then obtainable, and a first advance on the road to emancipation; and he so chafed at the delays interposed that he rashly threw up his seat in parliament. The measure which Wilberforce introduced in 1815 did not pass, disturbances in Jamaica hindered it, and it was not till 1819, when the colonial secretary himself proposed registration, that it became law, though it had been previously tried in Trinidad as a crown colony.

The African Institution had meanwhile been founded to promote civilisation in Africa, and many prominent men were enrolled amongst its members. The impulse to further action came, however, from another quarter. Years passed, and general interest seemed to slacken while the new conditions were being tested, but slavery remained what it had always been—none of its evils abated. The colonists were restive—they became violent; if they had any reason to fear a servile war they went the way to provoke it. In Jamaica and some other colonies the governors, following old usage, issued proclamations forbidding the assembling of negroes before sunrise or after sunset. This regulation,

which in its origin resembled the Norman curfew, and in a time of disturbance might be an expedient precaution, now took from the peaceable negroes their only opportunities for religious instruction and worship, when their day's toil was done. It so impressed John Wray—a young missionary in Demerara—as fatal to his work, that his protests on the spot having no effect, he resolved to appeal in person to the Colonial Office. He went from the governor's presence straight to the water-side to look for a ship to England. There was but one, taking in cotton, and it would sail in a few days. 'Captain,' he said, 'I want to go to England.'

'Oh,' answered the captain, 'I can't possibly take you; every berth is filled with cotton bales.'

'But,' said Wray, 'I will do without a berth; I will sleep on the cotton bales; only let me come on board.'

The captain yielded, and in a few days Wray was on the seas. He obtained his object, pleading against the proclamation as forbidding religion to the slaves. Lord Liverpool, then prime minister, received him, and sent out instructions that the slaves should be allowed to assemble on Sundays between five in the morning and nine at night, and on the other days of the week between the hours of seven and nine at night. The proclamation was withdrawn.

A few years later Wray made another voyage to England—that time from Berbice—to obtain protection against atrocious cruelties, pleading amongst other things that the flogging of women should

be abolished.¹ Thus it was that the accumulating evidence on every side again aroused public feeling, and made men realise that the movement begun must be carried forward to the extinction of slavery itself.

¹ See *History of the London Missionary Society*, by Richard Lovett.



THOMAS FOWELL BUXTON.

CHAPTER XXX

SMITH OF DEMERARA

THE leadership in this culminating stage of the struggle fell to Thomas Fowell Buxton, whom the country was not slow to recognise as equal to it. The bent of his nature prepared him for it; his sense of duty, his quick sympathies, compelled him to service; his convictions, his faith, made him resolute and courageous. His early association with the Gurneys of Earlham, into which family he married—his wife being a sister of Mrs. Fry—had strengthened the bias. He had declined, when he left the University of Dublin, the flattering overture to become its member, but he was still a young man when, in 1818, he was returned to parliament for Weymouth. A memorandum, written on New Year's Day of the following year, reveals the spirit in which he entered on this larger sphere. One sentence must suffice us here: 'My prayer is for the guidance of God's Holy Spirit, that, free from views of gain or popularity,—that, careless of all things but fidelity to my trust,—I may be enabled to do some good to my country, and something for mankind, especially in their most important concerns.'

In a very short time we find him on two select committees—one to inquire into the expediency of mitigating the Penal Code, the other to examine into the state of the jails throughout the kingdom. One of his first speeches was in support of Sir James Macintosh's Bill for the abrogation of the punishment of death in cases of forgery; and the next session he brought the Indian practice of 'suttee' under notice, showing that within four years, in the Residency of Fort-William, about 2366 widows had been burnt in self-immolation. A French official had once asked why Englishmen said so much about the slave trade, and yet let these Indian widows give themselves to the flames in their own dominions. But here now was an Englishman who saw the whole circumference.

Wilberforce had heard the speech on criminal law, and the very next day wrote to Buxton, asking him to unite with him in a new enterprise on behalf of the slaves, and pleading his own growing infirmities as reason why another leader should take up their cause.

'For many, many years,' he said (May 24, 1821), 'I have been longing to bring forward that great subject, the condition of the negro slaves in our transatlantic colonies, and the best means of providing for their moral and social improvement, and ultimately for their advancement to the rank of a free peasantry.'

Many minds were inclining in this direction; Buxton delayed his answer that he might investigate the ground for himself. The fear of a servile insurrection, of which much was said, also held him back. A year had passed, and more, when Wilberforce, bringing

Zachary Macaulay, came down to Cromer, and there met Dr. Lushington and Lord Suffield, comrades in the Criminal Law debates, to consider the position. Wilberforce himself had laboured unceasingly to collect facts and to form opinion. Many of his letters, in the year that followed the first suppression of the slave trade, were elaborate statements of the highest value, addressed to personages at home or abroad, whose sympathies he sought to win. Now, when the time seemed ripe, he summoned the nation to action with an 'Appeal on behalf of the Slaves.' In the result Buxton resolved to go forward. At a second council, a few months later, Macaulay gave his suggestions, and the whole field was surveyed with a view to remedial measures.

The campaign in parliament began (1823) with a petition from the Society of Friends, which Wilberforce presented. A few weeks later Buxton moved his first resolution: 'That the state of slavery is repugnant to the principles of the British constitution and of the Christian religion, and that it ought to be gradually abolished throughout the British colonies with as much expedition as may be found consistent with a due regard to the well-being of the parties concerned.' One point on which he laid stress in his speech was the emancipation of the children of slaves as a first step in the process. Canning met him with amendments, the most important of which added to the well-being of the slaves and the safety of the colonies—'a fair and equitable consideration of the interests of private property.' He also suggested that

any scheme of change should be in the first place submitted to the colonial legislatures. Accordingly, with the sanction of the House, the government at once sent out circular letters defining the objects which they recommended as basis of reform. They were:—

‘To provide the means of religious instruction and Christian education for the slave population.

‘To put an end to markets and to labour on the Sunday, and, instead of Sunday, to allow the negroes equivalent time on other days for the cultivation of their provision grounds.

‘To protect the slaves by law in the acquisition and possession of property, and in its transmission by bequest or otherwise.

‘To legalise the marriage of slaves, and to protect them in the enjoyment of their connubial rights.

‘To prevent the separation of families by sale or otherwise.

‘To restrain generally the power, and to prevent the abuse of arbitrary punishment at the will of the master.

‘To abolish the degrading corporal punishment of females.

‘To admit the testimony of slaves in courts of justice.

‘To prevent the seizure of slaves detached from the estate or plantation to which they belonged.

‘To remove all the existing obstructions to manumission, and to grant to the slave the power of redeeming himself and his wife and children at a fair price.

‘To abolish the use of the driving whip in the field, either as an emblem of authority or as a stimulus to labour.

‘To establish Savings’ Banks for the use of the slaves.’¹

This series of official suggestions remains as authoritative evidence of the existing conditions ; and in its very moderation reveals the strength of the claims urged on behalf of the negroes. The spirit in which the planters habitually ruled showed in the reception they gave to these mild advices. They violently protested against any infringement of their rights. The colonial legislatures declined to act. They cried out with the anger of men who believe their craft endangered. The Home Government had the recent revolt of the American colonies in mind, and gave the West Indians a year to produce their own plans.

There came a comment of a terrible kind from across the seas which gave an impulse greater than the most eloquent words. The death of the missionary John Smith under the hands of the planters in Demerara struck home. It must not be overlooked that missions had a considerable place in shaping the New World. They sprang under various names from the life of Christendom ; Spain, France, Germany, England, all sent men. They were in some instances impelled by ambition or were essentially sacerdotal,

¹ See *Memoirs of Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton*, edited by his son, Charles Buxton.

and in others weakened by fanaticism or ignorance. The missionaries were not all qualified—some saw but in small part, some made grave mistakes ; but amongst them were not a few of the choicest spirits of successive generations. Even as far back as 1675 John Eliot had presented a memorial to Massachusetts against selling captive Indians into slavery, and urged in general terms that ‘the selling of souls is a dangerous merchandise.’ Strike out of the world the results of missionary labour, and there would be relapses into darkness and barbarism, and a shrinkage in many directions, that would astound Europe. The humblest of them went forth to preach Christ, and in so doing advanced the Christian outposts against injustice and wrong. As a consequence they were hated by the selfish classes. The planters in the West Indies raged against them. When attention was drawn to the negroes by the discussions on the slave trade, the new societies hastened to aid in the Christian instruction of these forlorn people.

John Smith was despatched to Demerara by the London Missionary Society.¹ In the course of a few years he had gathered about him a congregation of eight hundred persons, and had won many to faith and to regular ways of life, and established for both old and young, bond and free, a weekly catechising. A rumour of what was passing in England reached Demerara. When the appeal went round to the

¹ These incidents have been often told—by Brougham with great power, and by others ; we follow the authoritative *History of the London Missionary Society* by Richard Lovett.

colonial legislatures, orders in council were sent to the crown colonies forbidding the flogging of women and limiting the hours of labour for the slaves to nine a day.

The governor of Demerara kept back this order, and as weeks passed the slaves, overhearing talk about it, became suspicious. They imagined that the king had sent an order to free them all, and that it was being withheld. Smith, when asked, told them they were mistaken ; ' something had come for their good ; ' let them be patient, and wait till the governor thought fit to announce it. As no announcement was made, a large body of slaves from various estates met one Sunday ; some were for waiting ; the greater number for ceasing work ; the meeting did not last many minutes. The next day, the governor, hearing what had happened, rode out with cavalry, and, meeting a band of negroes, told them of the order, which he had held for six weeks. They distrusted him, and one fired at the governor. Then they hastened to seize arms wherever they could find them.

Smith, the moment he heard of the outbreak, hurried to the scene. The leaders were most of them men who had nothing to do with the mission. He besought them to abstain from violence. Many of the negroes declared they would take no life. The missionaries were not allowed to go amongst the people and use their influence to quiet them.

For two days the excitement grew ; the negroes gathered half-armed ; the troops converged and fired ; a sharp conflict ensued. Not a single white soldier

lost his life ; two hundred negroes were slain ; no mercy was shown to the prisoners. Martial law was proclaimed. The white officers were feted by the white people, and presented with swords and plate, but filled up a record of infamy in the trials, floggings and executions they ordered. 'Seventeen prisoners were sentenced to lashes numbering from two hundred to one thousand, and to work in chains ; ten, within a week, receiving six hundred or seven hundred, and two almost the whole at once.' Forty-seven were adjudged to death ; the bodies of some were gibbeted in chains, and the heads of others impaled, making ghastly the highways. The black list was not exhausted when an order from England broke up the bloody assize.

Smith himself was arrested on a charge of inciting the slaves to rebel. For nearly two months he watched in his miserable prison the slow days come and go before he was brought to trial. Then, in violation of all evidence, they pronounced him guilty ; he was sentenced to be hanged, and recommended to mercy. They kept him in the common jail, against the protests of his doctor, in a foul room, over stagnant water, where a few weeks later death came to his release. The authorities would not permit his wife to follow the body to the grave. Rising early in the morning, while it was yet dark, led by a free black who carried a lantern, she crept to the place of burial, and witnessed secretly the last rites.

While Smith was dying¹ he was compelled to draw a bill upon the funds of the London Missionary

¹ See a special note in the *Memoirs of Buxton*.

Society to defray the expenses of the trial. Many years afterwards the secretary of that Society in arranging some old papers met with this bill. In looking at it his attention was drawn to one corner of the sheet, and, on examining it more carefully, he found, written in a minute hand, the reference, '2 Cor. iv. 8, 9,' on turning to which he found the text: 'We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed.'

There was a thrill of anger in England when the sentence of the court-martial transpired, and in eleven days two hundred petitions were presented to parliament for a revision of the sentence; but what could that now avail the dead man? When all was known, Brougham proposed an address to the king calling attention to the violation of law and justice in these unexampled proceedings. It was met by the government with 'the previous question'; but his speech brought out the facts with overwhelming force, and impressed them in the memory of the nation.¹

¹ 'The death of the Demerara missionary, it has been truly said, was an event as fatal to slavery in the West Indies as the execution of John Brown was its deathblow in the United States.' Morley's *Life of Gladstone*.

CHAPTER XXXI

UNFURLING THE FLAG

IT would be tedious to follow the fluctuations of parliament. One thing is noticeable—its wavering spirit, due to the evident ascendancy of special interests, of the landlords who held West Indian estates, of the merchants who imagined the sources of their wealth to be at stake. In the end events more than speeches, facts more than divisions, carried the day. The planters, when they cooled, pleaded a general denial, but offered no reforms; they insisted that the abolitionists were hypocrites and fanatics; they declared their statements to be gross exaggerations, that the acts of outrage and cruelty were exceptions, that the vast majority of the slaves were well cared for and happy.

Buxton answered these assertions by an inquiry into the death-rate. He found that, within ten years, the slave population in the fourteen sugar-growing colonies had decreased by nearly 46,000. In Tobago, within ten years, one-sixth of the slave population had perished, in Demerara it had diminished by 12,000, in Trinidad by 6000 within twelve years. 'The fact is,'

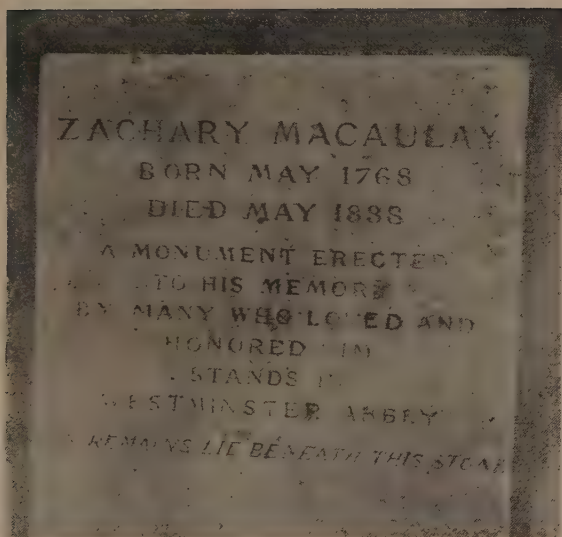
he said, 'that in Trinidad, as the late Mr. Marryat observed, "the slaves die off like rotten sheep."' These diminutions were exclusive of manumissions. The real cause of the mortality was the forced labour. What was implied in that he had described on a previous occasion. 'In Jamaica the amount of field labour allotted by law was nineteen hours a day during crop time, and fourteen and a half during the remainder of the year (with intervals of rest amounting to two hours and a half per diem). This work had to be done, it must be remembered, under an almost vertical sun; and the mode of its performance is thus described:—The slaves were divided into gangs of from thirty to fifty men, generally selected of a nearly equal degree of strength, but many were often weak or diseased. They were placed in a line in the field, with drivers (armed with the whip) at equal distances, and were obliged to maintain that line throughout the day, so that those who were not so strong as the others were literally flogged up by the drivers. The motion of the line was rapid and constant.'

There was an enormous work of preparation, of the kind that makes angry foes, necessary before anything could be achieved. Zachary Macaulay was not a man of eloquence or imagination, but he was a man of facts, unwearying in his verification of them, and resolute in the use to which he put them. 'Let us look it out in Macaulay' was a saying of his friends when they wanted knowledge. During the slave-trade debates he was always at hand in parliament, either in the gallery of the House of Commons, or below the bar of the

House of Lords, to give information or suggestion. 'His memory,' says Sir George Stephen, 'was so retentive that, without the trouble of reference, he could collate the papers of one session with those of three or four preceding years ; he analysed with such rapidity that he 'could reduce to ten or twenty pages all that was worth extracting from five hundred ; his acuteness was so great that no fallacy of argument escaped, and no sophistry could bewilder him ; and more than all, he was accuracy and truth itself. Every friend to slavery well knew Macaulay to be one of its most dangerous foes.'

Of the African Institution he was honorary secretary ; as the contest thickened, he was chief founder of the more aggressive Anti-Slavery Society, and he started and edited the *Anti-Slavery Reporter*, that invaluable aid to history, till he died. His knowledge and inquiry did much to supply the facts on which the movement relied ; his unflagging industry helped to distribute them among the people, and so to kindle the flame of righteous indignation which consumed opposition. Even when his health was broken, in 1829, Lushington wrote that his help was of 'inestimable importance' ; that 'the exertions of others were trivial in comparison.' These activities brought upon him the bitter hatred of selfish enemies. How mean the forms of personal slander was amusingly shown in the allegations that Wilberforce was a man who beat his own wife, and that Buxton himself held slaves at a date when he was a child of tender years.

It is pleasant to recall that the first speech of his



ZACHARY MACAULAY'S GRAVE AND TOMBSTONE IN THE CHURCHYARD
NEAR GRAY'S INN ROAD, LONDON.

son, the famous historian that was to be, was at an anti-slavery meeting in 1824, in Freemasons' Hall, the Duke of Gloucester being in the chair, and the death of Smith one of his themes. The father was completely overcome by his feelings, not only admiring the promise of this first speech, but rejoicing to see the support of his son given to the cause to which he was sacrificing his own life and his fortune. The tears stood in his eyes, and, as he walked home with his eldest and his youngest son, he expressed himself with unusual warmth. In the course of the walk, however, he remarked, 'By the way, Tom, you should be aware that when you speak in the presence of royalty, you should not fold your arms.'¹

In the essay on *Milton*, that once dazzled the critics, was this sentence of the same brilliant young thinker; 'If men are to wait for liberty till they become wise and good in slavery, they may indeed wait for ever.' It was from another point of view that Gladstone afterwards spoke of 'the value of liberty as an essential condition of excellence in human things.'

The years of delay brought home the fact that nothing could be expected from the mitigation of slavery. 'We did not know, as we now do,' said Buxton, 'that all attempts at gradual abolition are utterly wild and visionary.' The current of circumstances bore men forward. One indication was given at a crowded meeting in Freemasons' Hall in 1830, when Wilberforce took the chair for the last time; Clarkson

¹ See *Life of Zachary Macaulay*, by his granddaughter; also Trevelyan.

also was present. Buxton moved the first resolution, 'That no proper or practical means should be left unattempted for effecting, at the earliest period, the entire abolition of slavery throughout the British dominions.' Among the speakers were Brougham and O'Connell and other notable men, but even their full voices did not equal the strong feeling of the hour. As the meeting was drawing to a close, there stood up in the side gallery one less known, Mr. Henry Pownall, afterwards chairman of the Middlesex magistrates, who tersely expressed the general sentiment: 'The time is come when we should speak out, and speak boldly our determination that slavery shall exist no longer,' and he proposed as an amendment, 'That from the first day of the next year every slave born within the king's dominions should be free.' Loud and long applause greeted the suggestion, and it was registered as expressive of an irresistible desire, with the addition of a few prudential words.

The same year at Edinburgh, after a speech from Lord Jeffrey, Dr. Andrew Thomson protested: 'We ought to tell the legislature, plainly and strongly, that no man has a right to property in man; that there are 800,000 individuals sighing in bondage, under the intolerable evils of West Indian slavery, who have as good a right to be free as we ourselves have; that they ought to be free, and that they *must* be made free.'¹ The tumultuous feeling found vent in a second meeting; and 22,000 signatures were appended to a petition for immediate emancipation. The tide was

¹ *Buxton's Life*.

rising ; it began to be seen that the stoutest resistance would be overwhelmed.

Eager spirits grew impatient under this deepening sense of oppression and wrong, as they watched the tardy procedure of the enfettered years. A group of them, one of whom was George Stephen, formed what they called ' A Committee of Agency,' the object of which was to give information, to establish local societies throughout the country, and so to stimulate public opinion as to strengthen its expression in parliament.

Another most energetic member was Joseph Sturge of Birmingham, which soon became itself a centre of anti-slavery influence. Sturge had been present at the Friends' Yearly Meeting in London for 1823, when the petition was read which was afterwards presented to parliament by Wilberforce, and made his introduction of the question. William Allen, who had not long returned from his mission to Verona, was one of these Friends, and it fell to him to secure Wilberforce for this occasion. Sturge was present also a year later, when they again very earnestly debated the subject. James Cropper, of Liverpool, gave details of the traffic in slaves as carried on then in America. He was so much affected in speaking as to have more than once to pause to recover himself. In this intense sympathy was the spring of new power. William Allen, Luke Howard, Richard Phillips, Joseph Gurney, Joseph John Gurney, Josiah Forster, and others, sat round, a solemn hush upon them. From that hour onward Joseph Sturge was the unwearying champion of the slave.

Cropper urged that the only cure of his wrongs was the abolition of slavery itself—a view for which the country was not then prepared. The conviction grew upon Sturge, as it did upon Garrison about the same time, that total and immediate emancipation must be demanded. At the Yearly Meeting, in 1830, he implored the Friends to take more decisive ground. ‘It should be clearly understood,’ he said, in defining his position, ‘that the advocates of immediate emancipation do not thereby mean lawless, uncontrolled liberty, but they say: Grant us only the personal liberty of the slave, and then subject him to such laws as those most interested in his happiness shall think best suited to promote it.’

James Cropper is said to have been the first who spoke and lectured on abolition in public. A generation had passed since Clarkson broke ground in assailing the slave trade; this new attack went farther. In that undeveloped time there was scarcely a newspaper in England that favoured abolition; the voice was a necessary ‘agency’ in the education of opinion. Cropper visited most of the large towns at his own costs, and gave months to the work.¹ The cause soon found advocates, and anti-slavery societies multiplied. Some that Clarkson had founded rallied, and took new form. Lecturers were sent forth, among whom was George Thompson, whose powerful words were echoed in America, so that when at a later time he visited Boston, the place where this ‘infamous foreign scoundrel’ would speak was announced, and the

¹ *Life of Joseph Sturge*, by Henry Richard.

hour, and a reward of a hundred dollars offered to the man who would first lay violent hands on him that 'he might be brought to the Tar Kettle before dark.'¹

Nine years had passed, and the more urgently the government pressed reforms upon the planters the more bitterly they resented the intervention. A reduction of duties was offered to such colonies as would introduce ameliorations, but the suggestion was scorned. Some slight changes resulted from the more liberal administration at home. In some islands a 'Protector' was appointed. All slaves belonging to the Crown were set free; all negroes smuggled into the islands by slave traders and captured had freedom given to them, and they were a considerable number—in Antigua, for instance, in one month more than three hundred. A body of fourteen thousand, rescued from the slavers of the African coast, was settled in Sierra Leone, which, in 1808, had been made a crown colony. Moreover, the political disabilities of free blacks were removed. New voices, too, began to be heard in parliament and elsewhere, historic now—for example, the powerful eloquence of Brougham, and the statesmen of the new generation. More persuasive were the recitals of experience from those who had lived in the slave-lands—now it was some atrocity that fired humane men with unquenchable indignation and anger; and now some revelation that made every woman cry out—as when, for example, a mother was named as having to find thirty-seven pounds before she could

¹ Hole's *Memories of a Hundred Years*.

purchase, under a new law supposed to give relief, the freedom of her own babe of six months.¹

In 1831 Buxton raised the main question in a more definite form ; but the debate was adjourned, and parliament dissolved.

The next year is memorable for the passing of the first Reform Bill. The whole country was in a ferment of agitation. The anti-slavery party had been reinforced in the elections, but there was the risk that it might be engulfed in the excitement of the times. Buxton shrank from any course that might entangle the government ; he saw, too, that to lose their sympathy at this crisis would be a calamity. They, on their side, knowing the supreme importance of the next elections, wished to avoid a division on any issue that might further complicate the relation of parties. Lord Althorp, the premier, and Lord Howick, though both against slavery, entreated him not to give their enemies a handle 'at that tottering moment.' Friend after friend appealed to him. He held back to the uttermost ; but the conviction grew upon him that there was no question of more importance than the one he had in hand, and he feared lest, in the new circumstances, it should drift past again with indefinite delays.

Finally, it was arranged that he should bring forward his resolution, which was for a committee 'to consider and report upon the best means of abolishing the state of slavery throughout the British dominions, with a due regard to the safety of all parties concerned' ;

¹ Copley's *History of Slavery*.

and that the government should add as their amendment, neutralising though it might be, 'conformably to the resolutions of 1823.' Every turn of the debate was watched with intense interest. Would he persist to a division? Almost every friend he had in the House came to him and besought him to give way. He was sorely wounded, but stood firm. The minority of ninety that voted with him was far beyond his expectations. Lord Althorp afterwards said that it 'settled the slavery question,' for it showed what might be possible under other conditions.

The effort it cost him appears in a letter, in which Buxton pours forth his heart to his daughter: 'I kept open that passage in the Old Testament in which it is said (2 Chron. xx. 12), "We have no might against this great company that cometh against us, neither know we what to do, but our eyes are ever upon Thee."'

The West Indian proprietors in the House of Lords had obtained a committee, by which they hoped to justify their position. The committee now instituted by the Commons vigorously pushed forward its examinations. Both these committees had an array of witnesses such as could not have been gathered at an earlier stage. The West Indians resident in England were themselves surprised and softened by the facts established.

One of these witnesses was William Knibb, a Baptist missionary of seven years' experience in Jamaica, who, with two of his companions, had been

despatched to lay the state of affairs in that island before the people of England, and arrived just at this crisis. The hostility of the planters towards the missionaries had grown since the outbreak in Demerara. No sooner had the news of that event reached Barbadoes than the Wesleyan missionary there—a Mr. Shrewsbury, who had exerted himself in the instruction of the negroes and free people of colour—was attacked. On two successive Sundays his chapel was entered by a furious mob of white people, who, finding that their presence did not intimidate him, sent out a proclamation calling on all ‘true lovers of religion’ to assemble in arms and pull down the chapel.

An insurrection in Jamaica had now given occasion for more serious alarm. It was due to a suspicion of the slaves here also that ‘the papers of freedom’ were being kept back from them, and it was put down with severity. The planters seized the opportunity to assail the missionaries. They declared that slavery and missions could not coexist. The missionaries of all bodies were under strict rule—as the first instructions of the Church Missionary Society to those on the African coast show—to deal with men as men, keeping to spiritual issues. They could not limit the Christian message of goodwill to men of one colour, and here was their offence. The planters formed what was called a ‘Church Union,’ the avowed object of which was to destroy all the chapels and drive their missionaries from the islands. Knibb and others were arrested on false charges—the perjured wretch who concocted

the accusation against Knibb afterwards made full confession—nineteen chapels were destroyed, and a number of smaller places where negroes met. The mob broke into houses, and one or two of the missionaries were tarred and feathered.

When these things became known there was a flow of feeling which swept all before it. The devoted Knibb was a man of fervid eloquence; the power of his speeches was in their vivid statement of fact. In the English channel he had asked the pilot who boarded the ship that brought him from Jamaica, ‘Well, pilot, what news?’ ‘The Reform Bill has passed.’ ‘Thank God!’ was his response; ‘now I’ll have slavery down.’ His first speech in London was torch to a blaze of indignation. As he traversed the length and breadth of England, he might have used brave old Latimer’s words: ‘Be of good comfort, . . . we shall this day light such a candle by God’s good grace in England as, I trust, shall never be put out.’

CHAPTER XXXII

THE PROJECT OF EMANCIPATION

WHEN the new parliament met, the first under the Reform Act, in 1833, the outlook was changed. Buxton began the year by inviting the churches to set apart a day of prayer on the subject of slavery. He went down to the House of Lords, expecting to hear from the king's speech that one of the measures of the session was to be the emancipation of the slaves, and was greatly disappointed that there was no allusion to it. 'Do nothing hastily' was the counsel whispered round; but he instantly gave notice of motion, and asked the government their intentions. It was a moment of relief and joy when they answered that they would introduce 'a safe and satisfactory measure.'

The whole country was now astir. A rumour had gone forth that the ministry were hesitating, and this but stimulated public feeling. Crowded meetings were held everywhere. One voice was heard from all the churches; men of every grade and rank joined in the movement. Petitions came from north and south, east and west—nearly a million and a half of signatures. The Agency Committee invited all the anti-slavery

committees to send delegates to London without delay in favour of immediate and entire abolition. Delegates were elected and gathered, three hundred and thirty of them, in conference. They proceeded in a body to Downing Street, and presented an address to the premier. 'They' included in their ranks,' we are told, 'men of every calling and denomination ; among them were to be seen merchants, squires, bankers, magistrates, clergymen, and dissenting ministers.'¹ There could no longer be any doubt. The nation was awake and clamorous.

There were questions of great gravity to be weighed before the first practical steps were taken. The most difficult was, perhaps, that of compensation to the planters. The government asked the support of the abolitionists in proposing it. The more thorough-going objected on principle to any such recognition of a claim which was founded on man-stealing and sustained by wrong. We find the broad issue fairly stated in one of Dr. Arnold's letters of an earlier date : 'I cannot see why the rights of the planters are more sacred than those of the old despotic kings and feudal aristocracies, who were made to part with many good things which they had inherited from their ancestors, because the original tenure was founded on wrong ; and so is all slavery, all West Indian slavery, at least, most certainly.' Yet Arnold, on general grounds, favoured the idea of compensation ; and a large body regarded it as a pacific arrangement, which might avert the dangers of an insurrection. Buxton was applauded

¹ *Buxton's Life.*

when he put the view for concession before a public meeting ; and Joseph John Gurney stated the case for the planters with much force.

Looking back to-day, we can more clearly see that the planters themselves were enmeshed in an accursed system which England in its years of blindness had fastened upon them and done its utmost to foster ; so that it was less an act of generosity, as commonly accounted, than of justice that in its time of repentance it should bear some part of the burden of release.

The day, so long desired, at last arrived. Buxton's first duty was to present a petition from the women of Great Britain ; within ten days 187,000 signatures had been attached. 'There is,' said Stanley (the new colonial secretary, afterwards Lord Derby), in opening the debate, 'throughout the country, from one end of it to the other, a determination the more absolute and irresistible, because it is founded in that deep religious feeling, on that solemn conviction of principle which admits of no palliative or compromise, and which has declared itself in a voice to which no minister can be deaf, and no man who watches the signs of the times can misunderstand.'

The scheme he introduced proposed that slavery should be abolished throughout the British dominions ; that the slaves should be apprenticed for a certain period to their former owners ; that a loan of fifteen millions should be granted—a provision afterwards changed to a gift of twenty millions ;—all children under six were to be at once set free ; magistrates were to be appointed to carry out these changes ; and

arrangements were to be made for the religious and moral training of the people.

The strong anti-slavery feeling of the country was not wholly satisfied by these proposals. Greville writes in his *Journal* that Stanley developed his plan in a speech of three hours, handling the preliminary topics of the horrors of slavery and colonial obstinacy and misconduct with vigour and success, but failing to show how the measure was to be put in operation or to work. 'The plan produced rage and fury among both West Indians and Saints, being too much for the former and not enough for the latter. Practical men declare that it is impossible to carry it into effect, and that the details are unmanageable. Even the government adherents do not pretend that it is a good and safe measure, but the best that could be hit off under the circumstances; these circumstances being the old motive, "The people will have it."' Stalwarts, like Joseph Sturge, counselled strenuous and uncompromising resistance to weak conceptions. All the modification that Buxton could secure was a diminution in the term of apprenticeship; this was reduced from twelve years to seven for the field slaves, and from seven to five years for the house slaves.

'Every day he receives violent letters of censure,' we read in one of the Northrepps' letters, 'from one party for voting for the money, from another for saying the planters have no right to it; but he is under such a deep and powerful impulse for the good of his cause that nothing else touches him. He seems to be devoted to it in a way that renders him insensible to

minor influences. Self is strangely forgotten by him ; not subdued or resisted, but genuinely forgotten.'

When the question was raised in committee, the younger Macaulay, who was then a member of the government, resigned his position rather than be separated from his father, and in order to support Buxton against the apprenticeship, and he spoke with great effect. His resignation was not accepted ; but the next day the government produced its compromise.

The first of August, 1834, was fixed as the day of emancipation.

It was at this crisis, as member of the first Reformed parliament, that Gladstone began his career. In his election at Newark we get a side-light both on the divisions of opinion and the intensity of popular feeling. His father was an eminent West India merchant, of Liverpool, and the son, of twenty-three years, unknowing of the world, was heckled on the platform with questions about slavery. Not many months had passed before he was brought to his feet in the House of Commons by charges laid against his father in the course of the debate on abolition. His speech, which was generally approved, was in the main a defence of the West Indian interests ; he admitted that the incidents of cruelty were reason why the British Government should provide means for extinguishing the system, but objected that 'immediate and unconditional emancipation, without a previous advance in character, must place the negro in a state where he would be his own worst enemy.' The speech by which Gladstone subsequently made 'the first great

impression' that placed him in the front rank—a speech of two hours—was in defence of the apprenticeship system, and in a similar vein, pleading, as he believed, 'the cause of justice.' Yet he was eager to benefit the negroes, and urged his father to allow him to go to the West Indies and see for himself. He lived to speak in after years of the 'enormous and most blessed change' of opinion regarding slavery. Peel, it should be noted, held aloof from emancipation. Disraeli at a later time described the abolition movement as 'virtuous but not wise.' 'It was an ignorant movement.'¹

A recent historian has said that 'Negro Emancipation was carried out by England during a fit of national hysteria, and left a legacy of injustice and ruin'; but this judgment takes no account of the obstinate resistance of the colonial legislatures to reform, and is not just to the impetuous feelings which sympathy with the oppressed has often aroused in the strongest natures.

¹ Morley's *Life of Gladstone*, pp. 91, 105, 145.

CHAPTER XXXIII

THE COILS OF THE SERPENT

THERE was great rejoicing over this event—an exaltation of hope and feeling such as comes but rarely in the centuries. A spirit of devout thankfulness breathed through the country when it was known that the crisis of change had passed without disturbance. Planters and slaves were at one in peacefully accepting the new conditions. It has been a thousand times described how the slaves thronged to their chapels and churches, to await the dawning of their year of freedom, and fell on their knees in solemn silence, till the midnight bells sounded twelve ; then sprang to their feet and broke into praise to the Father of all. How Charles Wesley's soul would have thrilled, could he have heard his hymn ascending in these new circumstances—one which, but a few months before, it would have been accounted treason to sing:—

Blow ye the trumpet, blow !
The gladly solemn sound
Let all the nations know,
To earth's remotest bound :
The year of Jubilee is come ;
Return, ye ransomed sinners, home.

Let us glance as we pass into one of these chapels where the negroes have gathered :

‘Scarce had the clock sounded twelve when lightning flashed, and a loud peal of thunder followed. A moment of profoundest silence passed, then came the burst. They broke forth in prayer ; they shouted ; they sang ‘Glory, alleluia’ ; they clapped their hands, leaped up, clasped each other, cried, laughed, and went to and fro, tossing upward their unfettered arms. But, high above the whole, there was a mighty sound, which ever and anon swelled,—it was the utterings, in broken negro dialect, of gratitude to God.’

For some months all went well ; but human nature does not change with the stroke of a clock. The apprenticeship system had not long been in working before abuses reappeared. Flogging was continued, and other evils intruded. Buxton moved for an inquiry ; he was intent on securing the full rights of a British citizen to every slave in 1840, and slow to do anything that might arouse resistance, or jeopardise the future. When three or four years had passed, not a few Englishmen began to cry out that the planters had taken their millions, and were defrauding the nation of the rights to be given in return. Edward Sturge and two friends went out at great personal risk to the West Indies to investigate matters, and the report they brought back was decisive. It was another dire revelation of the hardening effect of the years of slavery.

As soon as its nature was generally known another large body of delegates assembled in London, and

it was resolved to go forward and demand from parliament the speedy cessation of the apprenticeship. Lord Brougham, who had objected to any disturbance of the first settlement, was roused to indignation by the facts now brought to light, and in February, 1838, moved a series of resolutions in the House of Lords, proposing, in one of his ablest speeches, that 'the period of predial apprenticeship in all the colonies' should terminate in the following August; but on a division he obtained only seven votes. An appeal was then made to the House of Commons. Petitions poured in, bearing upwards of a million signatures; and the feeling of the country was further manifested by yet another conference of three hundred and sixty-four delegates, prior to the debate. The resolution, which was moved by Sir George Strickland, and seconded by Joseph Pease, was rejected by a majority of fifty-four. That was on March 27. Never was a party more resolute than these men in their demand for immediate freedom. They dropped the proposal for 'August,' and substituted 'immediately,' so contriving a new motion within parliamentary rules, which was introduced by Sir Eardley Wilmot on May 22, the delegates having gathered for the third time to support their representatives. It was carried by a majority of three!

Buxton, having by this time withdrawn from parliament, was present in the strangers' gallery when the vote was taken. 'Sturge and that party whom we thought all in the wrong,' he afterwards wrote, 'are proved to be right. . . . The intelligence was received with such a shout by the Quakers (myself among the

number) that we strangers were all turned out for rioting ! I am right pleased.'

The government within a week persuaded the House into a resolution that virtually rescinded this decision. The House of Lords, moreover, remained beyond conversion.

Then the unexpected happened. The colonial legislatures, taking alarm at the possible consequences, themselves passed Acts declaring the apprenticeship at an end, and the slaves free on August 1, 1838.

A little later the ratifying Act of Parliament proclaimed slavery from that day 'utterly and for ever abolished throughout the British colonies, plantations, and possessions.'

Gladstone was Under-Secretary for the Colonies, for a short time before emancipation, so for the first time taking office, but his tenure was brief owing to the defeat of ministers. Amongst the permanent officials then were Henry Taylor, whose fame lives in *Philip van Artevelde*, and James Stephen, the son of Wilberforce's friend. These men both rendered great services in the questions then pressing on the nation, and both saw with great distinctness the dangers ahead. In his *Autobiography* Taylor says of his companion that 'under the title of Counsel to the Colonial Department he had, for some years, more than any other man, ruled the Colonial Empire'; it is more certain that he gave invaluable counsel as the Abolition Act was shaping. Taylor alludes unsympathetically to 'the saints,' and speaks with a note

of contempt of their 'howlings and wailings' ; but the reason why does not appear, for his narrative avers that their statements were supported by 'unquestionable facts officially authenticated.' We find him quite as explicit as to the state of things under the apprenticeship system. 'The planters, in their capacity of local justices, could perpetrate all manner of cruelty and wrong under the shelter of local laws—sending men and women to their horribly overcrowded prisons, to be put on the treadmill and flogged without mercy upon the flimsiest pretexts. The superior courts were partisans of slavery ; the legislatures were worse than the judicatures ; all were embittered and enraged against the negroes and their friends, and the police were fit agents for giving effect to the passions of their employers' (i. 243). The prospect seemed even darker when, after accepting full emancipation, the colonial assemblies turned to defy and rend the home government. 'Corruption, malversation, waste, and ruin,' says Taylor, 'went on in Jamaica and elsewhere. No provision was made for the due administration of justice or an efficient police ; none for securing to the negro the fruits of his industry, if industrious ; none for his education ; none for saving him from the consequences of vagrancy.' Worse evils crowded behind.

These things were the natural consequences of an evil system, not the first fruits of a new time. The first years of freedom brought questions of adjustment and control that were full of difficulty and led on to trouble. The chief gift bestowed in emancipation as affecting different countries was, that it enlarged the

faculty for future achievement,—it loosed new springs of life that were left to find their gradual course and make their own channels across long stretches of time, as rivers may wander slowly to the seas. The first results in the West Indies were a mixed issue. Many rejoiced in the evidences of progress ; some talked as if the new freedom were a Pandora's box from which hope had escaped. Men of mark since have seemed to sanction the superficial, once popular, allegation that emancipation was a failure. How often have we heard of the 'ruin' of the planters. It is well said in a letter that has reached us that 'the causes of that ruin lay much further back—in the reckless extravagance which the old order of things encouraged ; in the luxury, idleness, profligacy, which it promoted ; in mortgaged estates, and long-established habits of tyranny which could not be laid aside at once, and in the character which had been laboriously impressed on the negro population by their masters.'

Anthropologists were loud in insisting on the limitations of the negro race. The greater interest attaches, therefore, to a paper read last year in the anthropological section of the British Association for the Promotion of Science on *The Rapid Evolution of the Jamaica Black*.¹ Barely a couple of generations have passed since the blacks were savages of the most elemental type, with brains of the most childish stage of development, but to-day they are proving themselves fit to compete with white men in the professions, and their better types are indistinguishable mentally from

¹ By Miss Pullen Burry.

the European. The rapidity of the change is attributed to the security of government, widespread education by a good school system, an active religious propaganda by which the superstitions of ' obea ' have been abolished, the easy conditions of life, and the system of State-aided settlement of lands on deferred payment terms by which a class of peasant proprietors has been established.



WILLIAM WILBERFORCE AT THE AGE OF 69.

CHAPTER XXXIV

THE PASSING OF THE VETERANS

THE venerated Wilberforce had long since surrendered Yorkshire for a less onerous constituency, and had for some years been living in retirement when the Emancipation Act came first under discussion. He watched every stage of the procedure with the keenest interest, and died just a fortnight before it was finally passed. It was Brougham, then the Lord Chancellor, who originated the letter signed by members of both Houses, earnestly asking that he should be buried in Westminster Abbey.

How intimate his relationship with Zachary Macaulay appears in one of his last letters, where, in pathetic words, he assures him that 'One at least of your fellow-labourers, though I sincerely declare in the sight of the Almighty I am ashamed to appear to claim anything like a participation in your services, is only impressed with a sense of your indefatigable exertions in our cause, and of the prodigality with which you have lavished all your powers, both of body and mind, in its support.'

This year, 1838, which saw the climax of the

struggle in the abolition of the apprenticeship, witnessed also the death of Zachary Macaulay. When, after the abolition of the slave trade, Sierra Leone was transferred to the Crown, and the company of which he had so long been secretary came to an end, he had commenced business on his own account, with the warm concurrence of his friends ; and his transactions as shipowner and merchant, with the West Indies and Africa, grew presently to wealth. In the height of the struggle against slavery, which asked for every energy, he drew back from the business, and yielded to his partner, a nephew, 'the labouring oar.' Arrangements were made that seemed prudent and expedient, but the result in three years proved to be total ruin. He had lost the whole of his fortune, and had to face the world with his family as best he could. From that time the darkness thickened over him, but he kept the treasures of a good conscience and of faith unbroken.

The relations of the distinguished son to the father were a light in these darkened years ; when broken health bound him, it was the joy of his evenings to hear the familiar step approaching. When it was finally settled that this son should go out to India as member of the council, and take one of his sisters with him, the news to the older man was like another cloud, although one chief motive of the son was that he might secure the means of relieving his father's anxieties. Already his faithful wife had passed to her rest ; two or three more months, and his youngest daughter, a girl of great charm, was taken. Life seemed to be dropping its tragic curtain around him.

Trouble and care, weakness and pain, sorrow and desolation were about him. For a brief time he took refuge in Paris, then in Geneva, and then returned to London. Death came with slow steps, but sure,—Death, the cosmopolitan,—and in May, 1838, laid his hand upon him; he had completed seventy years. The son and daughter, returning from India, were, after a long voyage, as it were, almost within sight of land; but the news that met them was that their father was dead.¹

The tablet in Westminster Abbey, from the pen of James Stephen, not only records the services of forty years which he rendered in the struggle against slavery and the slave trade, but adds this distinction, that he

Meekly endured the toil, the privation and the reproach,
Resigning to others the praise and the reward.

The Clapham group — that spring of untold influences for good—was broken. Granville Sharpe had passed away, wrapped at the last in prophetic dreams. James Stephen had wrought knowledge and intellect into the movement, and was gone to his rest.

Clarkson survived to preside in his eighty-first year at the convention which met after the emancipation was completed. This was a notable gathering, for amongst the five or six hundred delegates gathered in Freemasons' Hall were nearly all the veterans of the anti-slavery cause, and not a few from other lands,—Isambert and Cremieux, Garrison and Wendell Phillips,

¹ *Life and Letters of Zachary Macaulay.* By his granddaughter, Viscountess Knutsford.

Knibb and others. Clarkson entered leaning upon Joseph Sturge, and was received in sympathetic silence, being too weak to bear a tumult of recognition. The two were in fitting association, for Sturge was now among the foremost pledged to continue the struggle. It was he who had proposed the formation of a new society, constituted in 1839 as the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, that more comprehensive name signifying a broader aim than was possible in the earlier stages; and this convention was designed to prepare its way, as a summons to the friends of the slave everywhere to combine in a wider crusade. Clarkson received in his old age, that same year, the freedom of the City of London; it was scarcely less a mark of respect that he was nominated the first president of the new society, though at his years that could not be more than an honorary post.

His name was known throughout England, for he had been the first organiser of committees throughout the country. The information he gathered was the basis of much action; the successive publications by which he marked the various stages of the struggle were weapons of power. Like other men, who have faced the revelations of the slave world, he was oppressed by their horror. For nine years he fell out of the ranks; but he came back to labour, as opportunity allowed, to the end.

In every campaign some few names reappear, while the 'distinguished services' and acts of bravery of others, which go far to decide the issue, slip from the record.

'Let it not be supposed,' said Buxton at a meeting

of the London Missionary Society, 'that we give the praise of the abolition of slavery to Mr. Wilberforce or to Mr. Macaulay, or to any man. I know the obligations we owe them; but the voice of the Christian people of England was the *instrument* of victory. Its Author, however, was not of human race; but, infinite in power, what His mercy decreed His fiat effected.'

These were wise words. In biographical narrative attention concentrates on a particular figure, and it may easily happen that one or other name for awhile unduly overshadows other men. 'It is hardly necessary to say,' wrote Henry Richard in speaking of the crowning work of Joseph Sturge, 'that there were scores and hundreds of men, some in parliament, and many out of parliament, who bore a most honourable part in the final triumph of the cause of freedom. If we abstain from mentioning names, it is because it would be invidious, seeing the list would be necessarily incomplete.'

CHAPTER XXXV

THE REBOUND

THE moral effect of this act of England was felt for many a year throughout the world ; but it left many things unchanged. It could not control economic conditions ; it could as little modify the differences of race as curb the greed of commerce. The men who had laboured for it regarded it as a call to other duties. It was beginning only—the first stage in an unknown course that might be full of difficulties.

One of their most painful discoveries was that the slave trade was not checked, but diverted and increasing. Buxton had been grievously distressed, when he first took up the subject, to find its proportions and appalling nature in the Mauritius, which did not come into possession of the British till some years after the passing of the Abolition Act. He now, in his comparative retirement, gave himself to a thorough investigation of the whole position. Nothing could be more horrible than the facts thus brought to light. The worst that had been stated in parliament was exceeded. Incidents of the Middle Passage attested beyond dispute drove him to the conclusion that its

cruelties and horrors had been aggravated by the very efforts made for its suppression. No corner of Dante's *Inferno* was more awful than some of these slave-ships where human beings were packed, to use a figure that frequently recurs, 'like herrings in a barrel,' the dead and living together. The death-rate would have ended the trade, but for the enormous profits. On one ship bloodhounds were found, trained to sit and watch over the hatches at night. In another instance when an English admiral captured a slave-ship, two slave-girls of twelve or fourteen years of age, were found packed in a cask. They were recognised as two out of fourteen captured in a village; the other twelve were missing, and, as casks had been seen floating in the sea, it was believed they had been thrown overboard. As to the extent of the trade, a careful analysis showed that upwards of 150,000 human beings were every year conveyed from Africa across the Atlantic, and sold as slaves. The losses in the capture and march, in the first detention at the slave depots, on the voyage, and from enfeebled vitality after landing, were estimated in the proportion of seven dead to three living.¹ Including the Mohammedan slave trade, it was calculated that, at the time the emancipation policy of England was

¹ Buxton gave the figures thus:—

Of 1000 victims to the slave trade, <i>one-half</i> perish in the seizure, march, and detention	500
Of 500 consequently embarked, <i>one-fourth</i> , or 25 per cent, perish in the middle passage	125
Of the remaining 375 landed, <i>one-fifth</i> , or 20 per cent, perish in the seasoning	75
<hr/>	
Total loss	700

declared, as many as 500,000 were carried into slavery or murdered by it every year.

On the Atlantic side, Cuba and Brazil were the chief receptacles; Spain and Portugal the great offenders, but other nations were compromised; treaties were broken, laws evaded. The western demand for labour was genuine; but nobody would dare to say that a tithe of this immigration was legitimate supply. The profits of the slave trade were a bait above all considerations. For instance, on one slave-ship captured and condemned before a Mixed Commission, the profit was estimated at £18,000, or just 180 per cent. In another case, at Havannah, where the cost of procuring 850 slaves was reckoned at £50 per head, the net profit was set down at £36,000.

The twentieth century cannot allow unknown 'syndicates' to draw a revenue from the supply of labour to any of its markets.

These revelations were overwhelming; Buxton could not have stood against them had not his heart been set on remedial measures, which gave him a greater hope. The evil must be grappled with in Africa itself. The accursed mischief must be stopped at its source. He thought out a scheme for penetrating the interior, making treaties with the chiefs, and setting up rival influences. Taking counsel with others, he submitted the facts he had collected to the government; and also the details of his project. They gave him full sympathy. Then he gave them to the general public in an impressive volume, *The African Slave Trade and its Remedy*. An enthusiastic meeting was held, at

which the Prince Consort presided. The current of feeling with him was further indicated by a baronetcy being conferred on him. It was agreed to send out an expedition for the exploration of the Niger. Funds were subscribed. The government gave aid. Three iron steamers were fitted; the officers and crews were carefully selected, and everything done that forethought could devise. Many prayers followed them as they sailed. The first letters promised well; every stage of the advance up the river gave encouragement; land was secured for a model farm, and trading begun. Then came disaster; malignant African fever broke out, and spread on the ships; the Africans on board escaped, but of the Europeans forty-one died. There was no alternative but to abandon the expedition and return.

It was the sudden clouding of a noble hope. Buxton, whose health was already failing, summoned his faith to bear the shock. He lived long enough to learn that even this broken enterprise had not been wholly fruitless. It pointed the way to much that has been since achieved.

A second expedition some years later, with less elaborated plans, was successful. The West Coast has been shadowed by frequent disaster, and has suffered terrible things in outbursts of war. How Buxton would have exulted in the vision, now a reality, of a Nigeria with a High Commissioner.

In the Nigerian campaign of last year, when the city of Sokoto was occupied by the expedition under Lugard, a territory with a population estimated at

twenty-five millions, passed under British rule. The slave trade had been rampant there, 500 slaves a day being often sold in the populous city of Kano alone, all which, of course, has come to an end.

We are apt to think of the abolition work of these first men as their chief claim upon our remembrance, but the indirect results of their labours were in reality of more account. The transformation and enlargement of thought which followed were to have a more powerful influence in the centuries than the emancipation of a generation of negroes. The records of diplomacy show in sequence a much more generous apprehension of the duties of nations. One event leads after another to a less selfish goal.¹

A first consequence was a change in the East also. There were ten millions and more of slaves in India, relics of immemorial custom, when the Act of Emancipation took effect in the islands of the West. Five years only had passed when the East India Company devised a procedure of relief which should operate gradually, without questions of compensation, within the dominion they controlled. Joseph Pease had a large share in helping this scheme forward, though Secretary Melville was the author of the Act.² It abolished (1843) the legal status of

¹ The gradual spread of anti-slavery feeling, the incessancy of the struggle following English action, and the nature of the difficulties overcome, can nowhere be better tracked than in the *Facts and Memoranda* compiled by the late J. Eastoe Teall, and issued in 1889 by the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society.

² See the *Sixty Years against Slavery* of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society. Paper by Joseph G. Alexander, LL.B.

slavery in a manner which may best be gathered from the actual clauses, which we quote in full as explaining a principle which has since been applied elsewhere :—

‘It is hereby enacted and declared that no public officer shall, in execution of any decree or order of Court, or for the enforcement of any demand of rent or revenue, sell or cause to be sold any person, or the right to the compulsory labour or service of any person, on the ground that such person is in a state of slavery.

‘And it is hereby declared and enacted that no rights arising out of an alleged property in the person and services of another as a slave shall be enforced by any civil or criminal court or magistrate within the territories of the East India Company.

‘And it is hereby declared and enacted that no person who may have acquired property by his own industry, or by the exercise of any art, calling, or profession, or by inheritance, assignment, gift, or bequest, shall be dispossessed of such property, or prevented from taking possession thereof, on the ground that such person, or that the person from whom the property may have been derived, was a slave.

‘And it is hereby enacted that any act which would be a penal offence if done to a free man shall be equally an offence if done to any person on the pretext of his being in a condition of slavery.’

The Indian Penal Code afterwards put the prohibition into more positive form, though as regards

holding a slave the illegality is made to rest on its 'being against his will.'

A curious illustration of the fluctuating influences which have affected the history of the slave is found in the effect of the Free Trade policy as first applied to sugar when Lord John Russell succeeded Peel. A great impetus was given to sugar planting in Cuba and Brazil by the removal of the differential duties on slave-grown sugar, with the result that the demand for slaves so increased as to send up their market price 20 per cent, while the number imported in one year was more than doubled. The revived activity of the trade led to a proposal to withdraw, as useless and costly, the cruisers which had been placed on the African coast with the concurrence of other Powers, which was defeated by the prompt intervention of the Church Missionary Society, and the firmness of Lord Palmerston.¹

Sharp debate more than once arose as to the cruising system, which was often denounced as ineffective and wasteful. A daring innovation was suggested as a reform by one who had taken part in the Niger Expedition—namely, that the slave-trading nations should combine in a convention, and all slaves be held by it as bond-servants for a term of years ; that negroes should be carried across the Atlantic in commodious ships, and on arrival be properly fed and housed ; their services only be sold, families not to be separated ; that every slave should be trained, and after a term as bond-servant serve a term as apprentice ; and be

¹ Stock's *History of the Church Missionary Society*.

finally returned home a free man—labour thus being secured, and the negro races trained.

As American testimony to the far-reaching influence of English action we quote Emerson. The closing words of his address at Concord, in 1844, on the anniversary of West Indian emancipation, interpreted the signs aright : ' The genius of the Saxon race, friendly to liberty,—the enterprise, the very muscular vigour of this nation,—are inconsistent with slavery. . . . The sentiment of right, once very low and indistinct, but ever more articulate, pronounces freedom. The Power that built this fabric of things affirms it in the heart, and in the history of the First of August has made a sign to the ages of His Will.'

CHAPTER XXXVI

BRAZILIAN SHADOWS

WHILE the contest was being waged at home, there was one observer in Brazil whose view of facts is still a matter of interest to Englishmen. Charles Darwin regarded colonial slavery as a 'monstrous stain on our boasted liberty.' 'I have seen,' he wrote, 'enough of slavery and the dispositions of the negroes, to be thoroughly disgusted with the lies and nonsense one hears on the subject.' 'I was told before leaving England,' he says in another letter, 'that, after living in slave countries, all my opinions would be altered; the only alteration I am aware of is forming a much higher estimate of the negro character.' 'The remembrance of screams, or other sounds heard in Brazil,' records his son, 'when he was powerless to interfere with what he believed to be the torture of a slave, haunted him for years, especially at night.'

Another aspect of slave-life not to be ignored is noticed by Wallace in his *Travels on the Amazon*. Speaking of one district, he remarks how 'contented and happy the slaves generally appear.' On several of

the smaller estates which he describes the life has an idyllic charm in its simplicity. They are, he says, 'perhaps as happy as children ; they have no care and no wants.' And he asks, 'Looking at it in this, its most favourable light, can we say that slavery is good or justifiable? Can it be right to keep a number of our fellow-creatures in a state of adult infancy—of unthinking childhood?'

The story of Brazilian slavery, though in large part hidden from European knowledge, appears to have been as ill-favoured as slavery elsewhere. The slave trade was bringing its 80,000 victims to these coasts when emancipation was being proclaimed in the West Indies. Treaties and squadrons were alike evaded. Every year these multitudes poured in as surely as the waves of the sea. A slave aristocracy, 'nursed on slavery,' as a Brazilian described it, 'cradled in slavery, and living in slavery,' prided itself on being above the gusts of sentiment. It held 1,200,000 slaves in a cruel bondage ; more than 500,000 were engaged in the cultivation of coffee, on which the business and revenue of the country largely depended.

Under the pressure of Great Britain, a law was passed in 1831, declaring all Africans free who were landed on Brazilian shores against their will ; but it was stifled in action by the slave-holders. Finally the trade was broken by the activity of the cruisers, whose captures were numerous enough to bring down the profits of the slave-merchants, who asked high prices as compensation for the risks they ran, and could not get them. In 1850 the slave trade was made

piracy ; the next year slave depots, south of Rio, were closed.

The emancipation of the slaves of the United States, in 1863, brought healthier influences into play. In 1869 a decree prohibited sales by public auction, and the separation of families. An abolition party was formed. The first result was the passing of a law in 1871, which declared all children, born of slave-mothers, from that time free, but requiring such children, till they were twenty-one, to serve their mother's masters. As this process was too slow, the abolitionists set themselves to persuade slave-owners to give liberty to their slaves, or to bequeath it to them in their wills, and also raised money to purchase freedom for others. A public emancipation fund was next created by law, and so an admirable movement carried forward from province to province by purely voluntary action. The proximity of the United States and the knowledge of what had taken place there made these things possible. The subject came repeatedly under discussion in the Chambers. In 1885 an Act for gradual abolition was passed. In 1888 one for total abolition without compensation took its place, and a decree set free 700,000 slaves. There came a reaction, bringing times of political convulsion. That changes so great should have been accomplished is a remarkable illustration of what may be done by gradual pressure against evils that seem overwhelming.

CHAPTER XXXVII

LIBERTY, FRATERNITY, EQUALITY

IN 'Eighteen Forty-Eight,' that year of revolutions, the three most powerful words in Europe were Liberty, Fraternity, Equality. They were loudly acclaimed and conspicuously emblazoned in the streets of Paris. Their echo sent a thrill through other capitals. In England they were the theme of innumerable speeches and sermons. Yet their enunciation was followed by the revival of Napoleonism and an era of disquietude.

Ten years had passed since Great Britain declared emancipation. In 1789, Clarkson, at the suggestion of Wilberforce, had visited Paris, in the hope of effecting some combined movement against the slave trade. He remained there for six months, won Mirabeau, Lafayette, and others to sympathy, but returned home without achieving his object. It is probable that his sojourn there only strengthened the suspicions of political aims that for a time harassed his friends at home. The subsequent resolution of the Abbé Gregoire slipped almost out of sight in the whirlwind of the desolating wars that followed. An anti-slavery conference arranged to be held in Paris in 1842, to which eminent

names had given approval, was forbidden by the French Government even after the foreign delegates had arrived. In 1848 the Provisional Government of the new Republic had not been a fortnight in power before it issued a decree forbidding slavery. We give the details as an interesting piece of history, in contrast to the debates of the British Parliament.

On March 4, 1848¹:—

‘The Provisional Government of the Republic, considering that no French land can any longer carry slaves, decrees: A Commission is instituted at the Office of the Minister of Marine and the Colonies to prepare, with as little delay as possible, the Act of immediate emancipation in all the colonies of the Republic.’

The members of the Commission were:—Victor Shœlcher, president; Mestro, director of the colonies; Perrinon, *chef de bataillon d'artillerie de la marine*; Gatine, *avocat aux conseils*; Gaumont, *cuvrier horloger*.

On April 27, 1848:—

‘The Provisional Government, considering that slavery is contrary to the dignity of humanity, that in destroying the free will of man it suppresses the natural principle of right and duty, that it is a flagrant violation of the Republican dogma, *Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité*; considering that if effective measures did not follow the proclamation already made of the

¹ From the *Recueil Complet des Actes du Gouvernement Provisoire* (Paris, 1848).

principle of abolition, the most deplorable disorders might result in the colonies, decrees :—

‘(1) Entire abolition of slavery in all French colonies and possessions two months after the promulgation of this decree in each of them.

‘(5) The National Assembly will regulate the amount of indemnity which must be paid to the colonists.

‘(7) The principle that French soil enfranchises the slave who touches it is applied to the colonies and possessions of the Republic.’

The eighth clause forbids every Frenchman, even in foreign countries, to possess, buy, or sell slaves.

This decree was carried out, the indemnity taking the form of annuities, which were regularly paid ; and the settlement was accepted by the French colonists with general satisfaction.

There was a mighty movement in the name of humanity preparing at that time in America, which was to have as revolutionary an effect as the barricades of Paris. This very year the mayor of its most cultivated city was confessing how he had misread the signs of the times when Lloyd Garrison in the *Liberator* began to plead the cause of freedom. He had reported that he had ‘ferreted out the paper and its editor’—that his office was ‘an obscure hole,’ ‘his only visible auxiliary a negro boy, and his supporters a very few insignificant persons of all colours.’ From such unpromising conditions do great causes sometimes emerge ; and

now, in 1848, he had to admit that he underestimated the forces which lay behind the early abolitionists. How far Boston, with all its high thinking, still was from apprehending liberty and fraternity, was shown two years later in the support which many of its citizens gave to the Fugitive Slave Law. As Lowell wrote in the *Biglow Papers*, of the *Pious Editor's Creed*:—

I du believe in Freedom's cause,
Ez fur away ez Payris is ;

It's wal enough agin a king
To dror resolves and triggers,
But libbaty's a kind o' thing
That don't agree with niggers.

But there the contest thickened. The day came when Boston draped its streets in black as one poor fugitive slave was led back by troops, and bells tolled as he was placed on board the ship which was to carry him southward to bondage.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

FIRST QUESTIONS IN AMERICA

THE conditions of the question in America were far more involved than in Europe. The United States of the middle of the last century found themselves in possession of a heritage not of their own planting, in which deeply rooted evils grew as freely as the giant trees on their Californian hills ; they could not be felled but by many strokes ; they could not fall but they must shake the earth. The progressive ideas of a young nation were weighted with the worst traditions. There was an admixture of relationships in forms before unknown. The South knew that it owed its development to slave labour, and therefore counted its slaves as wealth. Slavery had long been more than a domestic convenience ; it was far removed from the serfdom which for centuries had patiently tilled the fields of Europe ; it was wrought into the commercial fabric and had become a part of the machinery of production which States regarded as essential to their prosperity. Thus Dr. Hale has pointed out how Whitney's invention of the cotton-gin was like the giving of a new lease of life to slavery.

Moreover, the conflict of interests covered an area as wide as Europe; there were the same rough passions, the same selfish claims, to be held in check as everywhere else; and when the moment of supreme trial came, churches took opposite views of privilege and duty, and states and churches together were carried into war. The sacrifices demanded were vastly greater than any made in the old world—hundreds of thousands of lives; wealth that could not be counted; blood was to flow like the rivers; every home was to be pierced to its heart with sorrows. Twenty millions of money were as nothing beside the penalties which the Stern Decrees now exacted. In the dread strife one mind emerged—clear enough to see the issues, strong enough to face them; the like of whom the nations, east or west, do not often see—the assassinated Abraham Lincoln.

The American Declaration of Independence preceded by thirteen years the Declaration of Rights of the French Revolution. In the forefront is the famous sentence, which begins:—‘We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.’ There was an undercurrent of sympathy between America and France. Men of the new time, like Benjamin Franklin, were powers in Paris. The tragic Brissot was another link; he had been a prisoner in the Bastille, and, when released, took refuge in London; then he passed to America, where he represented the French ‘Friends of the Blacks’;

and, returning to Paris after the Revolution, became a leader of the Girondists and perished on the scaffold.

The founders of the American Republic took a wider view of many things than was yet possible in Europe. They had a clear understanding of the risks and wrongs of slavery. Virginia saw the negroes multiplying in the low country till they were double the number of the white population. Jefferson had removed the grievance of unequal taxation from the free people of colour, but perceived that the stoppage of the slave trade must be preliminary to real reform. Virginia again and again passed laws against it, which Great Britain disallowed. George III. in council, 1770, issued an Instruction, under his own hand, commanding the governor 'upon pain of the highest displeasure, to assent to no law by which the importation of slaves should be in any respect prohibited or obstructed.'¹ This order was debated in 1772, in the assembly of Virginia, and a dignified petition of remonstrance was addressed to the king himself, as we have already seen, but no answer was vouchsafed. It is humiliating to Englishmen to read of such an act in the very year that Granville Sharpe secured the declaration that the slave who landed on English shores was free. 'Pharisaical England!' wrote Franklin, and we cannot wonder, 'to pride thyself in setting free a single slave that happened to land on thy coasts while thy merchants in all thy ports are encouraged by thy laws to continue a commerce whereby so many hundreds of thousands are dragged into a slavery that can scarce be said to

¹ Bancroft's *History of the United States*.

end with their lives, since it is entailed on their posterity.' There were in truth two Englands, as there were two Americas.

In the Virginia Convention, two years later, Jefferson presented a paper enumerating the grievances of the English colonies, and this was one of them. 'The abolition of domestic slavery,' we read, 'is the great object of desire in those colonies where it was unhappily introduced in their infant state. But, previous to the enfranchisement of the slaves we have, it is necessary to exclude all further importations from Africa; yet our repeated attempts to effect this by prohibitions, and by imposing duties which might amount to a prohibition, have been hitherto defeated by His Majesty's negative; thus preferring the immediate advantage of a few British corsairs to the lasting interests of the American States, and to the rights of human nature, deeply wounded by this infamous practice.' The convention adopted a resolution pledging its members not to import or purchase slaves.

Washington had, with equal emphasis, condemned the trade. 'Is it not amazing,' wrote Patrick Henry, who rejoiced in the efforts of the Quakers to uproot slavery, 'that at a time when the rights of humanity are defined and understood with precision, in a country above all others fond of liberty, in such an age, we find men professing a religion the most humane, mild, meek, gentle, and generous, adopting a principle as repugnant to humanity as it is inconsistent with the Bible and destructive to liberty?' But here are words

from another of these Virginian thinkers, George Mason, which go deeper :—

‘Every gentleman here is born a petty tyrant. Practised in arts of desperate cruelty, we become callous to the dictates of humanity, and all the finer feelings of the soul. Taught to regard a part of our own species in the most abject and contemptible degree below us, we lose that idea of the dignity of a man which the hand of nature hath planted in us for great and useful purposes. Habituated from our infancy to trample upon the rights of human nature, every generous, every liberal sentiment, if not extinguished, is enfeebled in our minds; and in such an infernal school are to be educated our future legislators and rulers. The laws of impartial Providence may even by such means as these avenge upon our posterity the injury done to a set of wretches whom our injustice hath debased to a level with the brute creation.’¹

There is evidence also of a feeling in the various churches at this period which was deeper than that then commonly realised within the same ranges in Europe, for the evil was under their eyes.

In the first congress of the States, which met in 1774, when war was drawing daily nearer, an association was formed for practical measures, and one of its covenants was this, with a defiant note: ‘We will neither import nor purchase any slave imported after the first day of December next; after which we will wholly discontinue the slave trade, and will neither be

¹ Bancroft's *History of the United States*.

concerned in it ourselves, nor will we hire our vessels nor sell our commodities or manufactures to those who are concerned in it.' The times took no heed, remaining adverse.

When the die was cast, and independence secured, and the constitution of the body that was to hold the supreme power was under debate, a first question was a proportional representation of States, according to population and wealth, and it was agreed to reckon five slaves as three freemen. The negro in this instance stood for a property qualification. In this congress, which might be called constituent, when it proposed to forbid the importation of slaves, it was objected on behalf of Carolina and Georgia that they could not do without slaves, and that to carry the clause would be to exclude them from the Federation, for they would not enter on terms so unequal. Rather than lose them the Northern States ultimately agreed to a compromise which gave the slave trade another twenty years' run to 1808.¹ Even after that date it was urged that importation was a question not for congress but the state.

It must be noted, however, that the United States were the first of the nations to declare the slave trade piracy. This they did in 1820.² In that year we find Daniel Webster denouncing it in a speech delivered as he stood on Plymouth Rock: 'In the sight of our

¹ *The Cambridge Modern History*, vol. vii., 'The United States,' p. 282.

² Great Britain did not formally take this step till 1824; and she repealed the capital punishment clauses in 1842.

law,' he said, 'the African slave trader is a pirate and a felon, and in the sight of Heaven an offender far beyond the ordinary depth of human guilt. There is no brighter page of our history than that which records the measures which have been adopted by the government at an early day, and at different times since, for the suppression of the trade, and I would call on all the true sons of New England to co-operate with the laws of man and the justice of Heaven. If there be, within the extent of our knowledge or influence, any participation in this traffic, let us pledge ourselves here, on this rock of Plymouth, to extirpate and destroy it. It is not fit that the land of the pilgrims should bear the shame any longer.'

Yet forty years had passed when, under the piracy law, the first slave trader was convicted and hanged in New York. This incident followed the conclusion of a treaty, in 1862, after the war with the South had begun, which the United States, on its own initiative, had negotiated with Great Britain, for the suppression of the African slave trade, especially with a view to securing a reciprocal right of search for the squadrons engaged.

Americans had long been forbidden to take part in the slave trade of foreign countries; and foreigners were prohibited from taking part in the internal trade between the States, which for many a year went on unchecked. But right down to the very last there was a secret and yet notorious emporium of the slave trade under the direction of Spaniards in New York, who dealt with Cuba.¹

¹ Leland's *Life of Lincoln*.

In the original constitution of the first thirteen States there was no mention of slavery or the slave. Slave-holding was practised in them all as an old-world institution. The northern feeling must have been affected by the continual inflow of immigrants from countries where slavery was unknown, but the movement against slavery was of purely native growth. In the South economic considerations ruled, and seem to have extinguished the higher sentiments which at one period found expression. The North was recruited by new industries with ever-growing possibilities of expansion ; the South saw its lands limited and liable to exhaustion, and schemed to secure its ascendancy in the Senate. The policy of many years was affected by the questions that thus arose. Slave labour was not so profitable as free labour in the temperate zone of the North, and, as immigrants took the place of the slaves, natural causes came into play and pushed it aside. At the same time, the intertwining of commercial interests and the social relationships which arose between North and South retarded the growth of freedom, and it took years to reawaken the sense of human kinship between the races. By an ordinance of 1787 the whole of the north-west territory was declared free ground, on which it was illegal to hold slaves. From that time every new State admitted to the Union was accounted slave or free ; and for thirty years the admissions alternated, so that in 1819 there were eleven free and eleven slave States ; and as each State sent the same number of men to the senate at Washington, there was a balance of power. Missouri

was then demanding admission as a slave State ; and there were other claims impending which, if admitted, would have given the South ascendancy. The contest which ensued was settled by a line of compromise which was drawn across the disputed region, north of which was freedom, south of which was slavery. This was called the Missouri Compromise, and endured for a generation.

If the course of empires westward took its way, so did Southern ambitions. Texas, by Southern aid, had shaken off the Spanish dominion, and established an independent republic ; and now its admission into the Union was demanded. The year that followed its annexation brought the war with Mexico ; and as one stretch of territory after another, including California, with its suddenly discovered gold, and San Francisco with its outlook to the Pacific, fell under the power of the States, all the old rivalries revived with tenfold intensity. No people could have witnessed transformations on this scale without a thrill of some kind. The South sought to extend the area of slavery not because of any political preference for the 'institution,' but for the sake of the greater wealth and power to be won from the slave produce of enlarged plantations. It is difficult for later generations to enter into the controversies which recurred with every presidential election. The radical division of interests between North and South looms clearer as the years advance ; and the questions that divide them become more acute.

A crisis came when, in 1854, two new Territories

were organised—Nebraska and Kansas—with a proviso which left the question of freedom or slavery to be decided by the territories themselves, and so set aside the Missouri Compromise. Fair in appearance, the arrangement was both snare and delusion. The neighbouring slave States sent armed bands over the border to control the decision ; the free soilers of the North sent emigrants southward to possess the ground.

CHAPTER XXXIX

THE FUGITIVE SLAVE

THE fugitive slave has a conspicuous place in American history—he survived all penalties. In the ages past he had wandered through the years, as a shadowy figure, calling down doom on the oppressor. In regions where States divided authority and took different views, his passage from one to another raised questions. In all legislatures the protection of property is a fundamental necessity ; if the slave be property, to whom does he belong ? If he be lost property who shall reclaim him ? But the escaped and fugitive slave had pitying friends ; they did not consider whose he was, or what charges there might be against him ; an ever-increasing number conspired to help him from slavery to freedom. It was a far cry to Canada, but once there he was under another rule ; Canada was more than a free-soil State ; she was not hampered by the pledges of a compromising Congress, and from the first had disowned slavery, as Washington and the fathers of Virginia would have done. The slave who crossed her borderland was safe, and found, on the whole, sympathetic treatment from the colonists.

From the plantations of the South a stream began to flow northward, at first secretly, but with growing volume that attracted attention, as one slave after another stealing away alone, turned northward to the land of refuge, and presently bands of fugitives followed, led by men who were eager to befriend them, and knew the secrets of the journey.

The slave States, when they obtained admission into the Union, brought this question of the fugitive slave with them. From time to time it arose for consideration, and measures of restraint were adopted. As the conflict of feeling grew, it was exasperated when in 1850, after long years of irritation and complaint, a more stringent law was enacted by Congress. Daniel Webster was then Chief Secretary, one of the stronger men who had risen from the log-house and saw-mill to the highest places, whose 'massive intellect' the foremost of his countrymen admired, and whose speeches had a Demosthenic power. It was a critical period; murmurs of secession began to be heard; the rights of States were being weighed, not so much with respect to slavery as to the political future, which might be preparing the redivision of the continent.

Compromises were under discussion. The later Lincoln, though he moved on opposite lines, had not a stronger faith in the Union than had the earlier Webster. Twenty years had passed since he defended the Federal Constitution against the pleas which would have given any State the right to 'nullify' an Act of Congress; and never had he receded from the view which would have imperilled everything to keep the

nation 'whole and undivided.' In his treatment of the fugitive slave question he fell into a fatal error, which clouded his last years. The new law put the Federal machinery into the hands of the slave-holder ; the affidavit of a master was sufficient evidence against a runaway slave ; the Federal officers—not those of the individual State—were compelled, under heavy penalties, to arrest and give him back. 'You of the South,' said Webster at a public dinner, 'have as much right to secure your fugitive slaves as the North has to any of its rights and privileges of navigation and commerce.' It was in vain objected that the new law placed the liberty of every fugitive at the mercy of any 'commissioner,' clerk, or marshal of a Federal court, or Federal postmaster or collector of customs in the State where the seizure was made. There was indignation mixed with profound sorrow when the edict went forth. It provoked resistance. Then it was, after a sleepless night of troubled thought, that Whittier wrote 'Ichabod'—those solemn lines, matched only by Browning's 'The Lost Leader':

From those great eyes
The soul has fled ;
When faith is lost, when honour dies,
The man is dead.

Webster lived only long enough to know how cruelly the law was applied, and to realise the antagonism it aroused.

The sweeping nature of the law made the Northern cities flutter. It struck dismay into the coloured communities. No one who had been once

a slave was any longer safe. Men, thinking only of the rewards of a capture, crept like bloodhounds on the track of a fugitive, though for months he might have believed himself secure in freedom. There were cases of recapture after three or four years of liberty. Numbers took flight for Canada. Senator Sumner a little later estimated that altogether 'as many as six thousand Christian men and women, meritorious persons,—a larger band than that of the escaping Puritans,—precipitately fled from homes which they had established to British soil.' At the same time vigilance committees were formed in the principal cities of the North, to give notice of the coming of 'kidnappers' and to thwart their purpose. Prominent clergymen and laymen publicly announced their readiness to shelter the fugitive.

In Boston there was tumult. A body of citizens there had thanked Webster for his leadership. One prominent personage had spoken of the fugitive slaves as 'foreigners' in Massachusetts, with 'no right to be there,' and to be repelled on the same ground that foreign paupers and lunatics were excluded. In another strain were the words of Theodore Parker in one of his sermons: 'To law framed of such iniquity I owe no allegiance. Humanity, Christianity, manhood revolts against it. For myself,—I say it solemnly,—I will shelter, I will help, and I will defend the fugitive with all my humble means and power.' A letter he addressed to Fillmore at Washington is more definite:—

'I have a religious society in this town composed

of all sorts and conditions of men—fugitive slaves who do not legally own the nails on their fingers, and cannot read the Lord's prayer ; and also men and women of wealth and fine cultivation. I wish to inform you of the difficulty in which we are placed by the new Fugitive Slave Law. There are several fugitive slaves in the society. They have committed no wrong ; they have the same inalienable right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness that you have. They naturally look to me for advice in their affliction ; they are strangers, and ask me to take them in ; hungry, and beg me to feed them. . . . Yea, they are ready to perish, and ask their life at my hands. . . . But your Law will punish me with *a fine of a thousand dollars and imprisonment for six months* if I take in one of these strangers, feed and clothe these naked and hungry children of want, . . . or help them, directly or indirectly, when they are ready to perish.'

In one instance two slaves of the higher order were tracked—the man a joiner, who with his wife had cherished for years a plan of escape ; they had saved a little money, and bought piece by piece, by stealth, from different dealers a suit of gentleman's clothes ; these the wife put on ; the husband attended as her servant, and so they escaped. They had been settled in Boston, the man working at his trade, for two years, and were justly esteemed, when Parker learnt that slave-hunters were in pursuit of them. The vigilance committee were warned. The first arrest was met by a counter-charge. Sixty gentlemen gathered in the hallways of the hotel where the kidnappers were

staying to watch them from morning to night; at last they yielded to Parker's persuasions, and left in trepidation for New York; then the two rescued ones were despatched to the safe-keeping of James Martineau in far-away Liverpool. Still more exciting incidents followed. When slave-hunters were known to be 'looking for their prey,' Parker was wont to hold them in check by issuing a proclamation in which they were held up to scorn, and as minutely described as a fugitive slave might be. More than once tumultuous crowds threatened civil strife.¹

In Cincinnati a band of fugitives was overtaken, who determined to fight and to die rather than be taken back to slavery. A young Mulatto woman cut the throat of her little daughter, then attempted the life of her three other children and to kill herself, but was overpowered before she could complete her desperate purpose. 'The constitution,' said the lawyer who pleaded for her before the court, 'expressly declares that congress should pass no law prescribing any form of religion or preventing the free exercise thereof. If congress could not pass any law requiring you to worship God, still less could it pass one requiring you to carry fuel to hell.' But she was sent back to slavery.

Here lived Levi Coffin, an energetic thriving Quaker, whose quaint name had descended from an English knight of the reign of King John.² First in Newport, and afterwards in Cincinnati, he had allowed his house to become a rendezvous for fugitive slaves. On one

¹ Frothingham's *Life of Theodore Parker*.

² *Reminiscences of Levi Coffin*.

occasion a party of seventeen had taken refuge with him, and their pursuers followed, directed to his house as that of 'the notorious nigger-thief,' who could give them information, and had probably distributed the slaves in hiding among his friends. They hung about the neighbourhood for some days, but could get no glimpse of the runaways, and when they left declared there must be an underground railway, of which Coffin was president. The phrase clung to him for years, till there were no more fugitive slaves to rescue.

His wife was as enthusiastic in the work as himself; his home seems to have had the sanctity of a city of refuge; slaves lay often concealed there for weeks together, of whom no one else in the house knew anything. Once when questioned before a grand jury, he replied that 'persons often stopped at the house who *said* they were slaves, but the law did not presume that such people could tell the truth.' A company of seventeen fugitives had come, hungry and destitute, and two of them suffering from wounds inflicted by pursuers who claimed them as slaves, 'but he had no legal evidence that they were slaves; nothing but their own statements, and the law of the State did not admit coloured evidence.' So Coffin under the earlier law turned the edge of a legal attack, and even his adversaries could but smile.

'I found it necessary,' he tells us in his *Reminiscences*, 'to keep a team and a waggon always at command to convey the fugitive slaves on their journey. Sometimes, when we had large companies, one or two other teams and waggons were required. These journeys had to

be made at night, often through deep mud, and by bad roads. We had different roads for sending the fugitives to depots, ten, fifteen, or twenty miles distant, or when we heard of slave-hunters having passed one road, we forwarded our passengers by another.' Many people were leagued in the management of this underground railway, but of the thousands who passed northward, not half could have travelled in this fashion.

Many escaped under disguises, some by ingenious ruse. There were dangers of many kinds to be faced,—

Most disastrous chances,
Of moving accidents by flood and field,
Of hair-breadth 'scapes.

Footsore and hungry and ragged, they trooped along. One, John Mason, a slave escaped from Kentucky, helped some thirteen hundred fugitives to Canada, and was himself recaptured by bloodhounds, both his arms being broken.¹ Harriet Tubman, who was born a slave woman, gave herself to this rescue work when she became free, and, making nineteen excursions south, brought off three hundred. Thomas Garrett, of Delaware, another of the valiant Quakers, who was known as 'the stationmaster' of the underground railway, helped as many as twenty-seven hundreds of slaves to liberty.

The Fugitive Slave Law was never more than a whip of terror.

¹ Compare *The Underground Railway from Slavery to Freedom*, by Professor Siebert of Ohio University.

CHAPTER XL

HARRIET BEECHER STOWE

NO incident of the time showed more clearly the gathering feeling than the reception given to Mrs. Stowe's tale of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, which appeared in 1852, when the Fugitive Slave Act had been two years in operation. It could not be accepted as a full presentation of Southern life; it showed one side of slavery rather than the whole; it probably had no direct effect on the progress of events, though its influence can be distinctly traced in legislation beyond the States. As a book, it was more an indication than a creation; but it set the plea against slavery in a form that all classes and nations could understand, and produced by bare fact and human feeling a world-wide result—greater than belongs to art or genius. Yet President Lincoln is said to have asked, when he took Mrs. Stowe's hand for the first time, 'Is this the little woman who made this great war?' She had come to Washington to take part in a thanksgiving dinner given to a thousand fugitive slaves. They sang that strange rhythmical chant—bidden, then, on the Southern plantations:—

Oh, go down, Moses,
Way down into Egyptland!
Tell King Pharaoh
Let My people go!
Stand away dere,
Stand away dere,
Let My people go!

It was the darkest hour of the civil war which held America in dread suspense, and Mrs. Stowe heard other words of more significant omen when she listened in the senate chamber to the 'Second Inaugural' of Lincoln himself. This little woman was not the cause; but she was the voice to the sentiment which was the noblest and mightiest force. Of all who pleaded for freedom and brotherhood she was the most widely heard, for she spoke in every home, and appealed to the Old World as powerfully as to the New. If she had never written *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, there would be much in her life worthy of note. Her faith, her courage, her capacity, were apparent in her own home from the first, and she was exemplary in the least things as well as a leader in those that were greatest.

Harriet Beecher was born in 1811, in Litchfield, Connecticut. The first of the Beechers that set foot in America came with a company under the leadership of a London clergyman, eighteen years after the arrival of the 'Mayflower.' Their descendants were vigorous men, strong in mind and body, and masters of their environment. Harriet's grandfather, for instance, was farmer and blacksmith and maker of tools, but boarded college students and others, for the sake of their

conversation, and frequently spent his evenings with them in study. Her father was Dr. Lyman Beecher, whose first settlement as a minister was on Long Island, at East Hampton, a wild and remote spot, once thronged by wildfowl in countless flocks, and where, in accordance with custom, one-fourth of the whales stranded on the beach were presented to him as a portion of his salary. Litchfield was a village of a different order, set on a fruitful hill, with lawyers and senators and veteran patriots amongst its inhabitants.

Harriet was hardly four years old when her mother died. She went subsequently on a long visit to her aged grandmother's house, where she came under the care of an energetic aunt, whose 'ideas of education were those of a vigorous Englishwoman of the old school.' The child committed to memory hymns, poems, and passages of the Bible which were often summoned to her pages in mature life. No sooner could she read than she began the search for books. Many an hour, after her return home, did she spend in her father's study, almost awed by the grave volumes that looked down from the shelves. At school, when but twelve, she attracted attention by an essay on the subject, 'Can the Immortality of the Soul be proved by the Light of Nature?' It was a hint of the still more difficult questions which she essayed to answer in later years. Under the care of her elder sister, Catherine, herself a woman of rare intellect, who had started a school in Hartford, Harriet's education advanced apace. She began to read Latin, and presently French and Italian; she dreamed of being a poet.

Her father at Boston found himself in the face of a great reaction against the Puritan theocracy which had formerly ruled in Massachusetts. These experiences gave colour to much which she afterwards wrote, and must be borne in mind in any judgment of her work. Six years later, Dr. Beecher removed to Cincinnati. There the sisters Catherine and Harriet were occupied with schemes for the improvement of popular education. They had able counsellors in their brothers; Henry Ward, who attained the widest fame, was already taking part in public questions, and writing for the press. The event of moment was Harriet's marriage to Professor Stowe, in 1836. His first wife had been one of her closest friends, and he had been left widowed and forlorn after a brief happiness. Harriet, for her friend's sake, had sought to rouse and cheer the solitary man, and the sympathy which thus grew up between them deepened into the attachment which two years later resulted in marriage. The Professor had many gifts and great learning. Within a few months, as one of the founders of 'The College for Teachers,' he was sent by the State legislature to report upon the common schools of Europe, especially those of Prussia.

During his absence his wife returned to her father's house, and, while there, witnessed an outbreak of mob-violence instigated by Kentucky slave-owners, who destroyed the press of an anti-slavery newspaper. 'No one,' she wrote to her husband at this time, 'can have the system of slavery brought before him without an irrepressible desire to *do* something; and what is there to be done?' This feeling seems to have been

widespread; even among the most courageous friends of freedom. At Alton, in Illinois, a mob from Missouri attacked the office of another anti-slavery paper, set fire to the house, and shot Lovejoy, the owner, dead at his door. Her brother Edward, a minister, was the bosom friend of Lovejoy when this happened. From the first, the Beecher name was honourably distinguished in the struggle against slavery; but in the North, as well as in the South, those who advocated abolition did so at their own peril, and were held to be infringing on the rights of other people in a manner dangerous to the stability of the constitution. Among Mrs. Stowe's early recollections were her father's sermons and prayers and frequent anguish of soul for the poor slave. Living on the borders of a slave State, she herself saw not only the system at its best, but many of its cruel incidents. Not all at once, but gradually, she realised its full evil. After her marriage, she found in her husband a warm friend of the oppressed. The children of liberated slaves she received into her own home, and taught with her own children; and fugitive slaves, whom they were ever ready to befriend, found more than once a refuge in their house, and slept away their terror while others watched with arms at hand.

Some years had passed since she began to write for publication. Her first stimulus was a prize of fifty dollars, offered by *The Western Magazine*, for a story. This she gained in 1833; and her success prompted her to other endeavours. These years were full of cares—the charge of children, the management of a

household often under difficult conditions, with the harassment of narrow means, and frequent ill-health. She met them bravely, with unfaltering faith. The same spirit sustained her in the cholera time, when her little son was taken from her. 'Bear up,' she wrote to her husband, who was at a distance. 'Let us not faint when we are rebuked of Him.' The anguish of that time lives still in the pathos of some pages in *Uncle Tom*.

One of Mrs. Stowe's friends, who wanted the conclusion of a story for which an editor was waiting, has described her as she sometimes worked in earlier years. She found her 'tending one baby, and watching two others (twins) just able to walk.' Then began a lively colloquy.

'I carried my point. In ten minutes she was seated; a table with flour, rolling-pin, ginger, and lard on one side, a dresser, with eggs, pork, and beans, and various cooking utensils on the other; near her an oven heating, and beside her a dark-skinned nymph, waiting orders. "Here, Harriet," said I, "you can write on this atlas in your lap; no matter how the writing looks, I will copy it." "Well, well," said she, with a resigned sort of amused look, "Mina, you may do what I told you, while I write a few minutes, till it is time to mould up the bread. Where is the ink-stand?"'

We need not follow the scene to the end. The work was finished, copied, and the next day sent to the editor. There is a passage in a letter twelve years later, which pictures the same kind of confused exist-

ence, in which her will dominates. It was chronic. All her life long she liked to gather her children, or household friends about her, and read to them what she had written before it went further.

In 1850 Professor Stowe left Cincinnati, in response to an invitation from Bowdoin College, in Brunswick. The time of their removal thither coincided with the passing of the Fugitive Slave Act by congress. After Mrs. Stowe reached Brunswick, Mrs. Edward Beecher—her brother's wife, with whom she had stayed on the way to Boston—wrote to her: 'Hattie, if I could use a pen as you can, I would write something to make this whole nation feel what an accursed thing slavery is.'

'One of Mrs. Stowe's children remembers well the scene in the little parlour in Brunswick, when this letter was received. Mrs. Stowe herself read it aloud to the family, and when she came to this passage, rose up from her chair, crushing the letter in her hand, and with an expression on her face that stamped itself on the mind of her child, said: "I will write something. I will, if I live." She afterwards sent a message to her sister: "Tell Katy I thank her for her letter and will answer it. As long as baby sleeps with me nights I can't do much at anything, but I will do it at last. I will write this thing, if I live."'¹

In the following spring, the first chapter of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was despatched to Dr. Gamaliel Bailey,

¹ We are indebted in this sketch to the *Life and Letters of Harriet Beecher Stowe*, edited by Annie Fields; and gratefully acknowledge the permission of the publishers, Sampson, Low, Marston & Company.

the editor of *The National Era*, who had taken refuge in Washington, after two attacks on his office in Cincinnati. The story ran its course, the author accumulating facts in evidence as she advanced, but still doubtful as to the effect of her work. Early in 1852 it was reissued as a book by a Boston publisher, and within a few days ten thousand copies were sold. Within a year three hundred thousand had gone forth. We cannot chronicle all the incidents which crowd about its history. In England it was universally read with tears, and with smiles, and with deep-hearted sympathy. One result was the sending, at the suggestion of Lord Shaftesbury, of an address from the women of England to the women of America, which bore the names of 562,448 from every rank. It was but the expression of that impulsive desire to do something for the cause of the slave, which the reading of the book seemed everywhere to inspire. Yet, as Mrs. Stowe afterwards wrote, while it cheered the small band who faced public opinion, it fell 'like a flower into the white heat of a furnace,' and added intensity to the conflict. The attitude of England herself in years past had wrought abiding mischief of which her people now had no knowledge. In France numerous translations appeared. George Sand reviewed the book in glowing terms. In Italy also it found eager readers. Quickly, from country to country, it made the round of the world. In the British Museum library to-day there are copies in twenty different languages. The sale in Great Britain and the colonies, by the end of the year—that is, during the first nine months of

publication—was a million and a half. The plot was also dramatised, and played not only in the leading cities of the United States, but in every capital of Europe.

Mrs. Stowe would probably never have known how deeply her words had sunk into the hearts of the people had she not soon afterwards visited Europe. No welcome was ever heartier, no progress ever more triumphal. In city, in town, in quiet village, people of all classes thronged upon her way. She was entertained in every variety of form—a plain little woman the centre of interest wherever she appeared. At a public meeting in Edinburgh she was presented with a thousand golden sovereigns on a silver plate, the result of a subscription of pennies, for aid in her work amongst the slaves. At Stafford House, in London, in the presence of an illustrious company, she was presented by the hand of Lord Shaftesbury, with an address from the ladies of England. Addresses of sympathy were presented also from a large number of towns.

It was not, however, by virtue of its genius, or as a book, that *Uncle Tom's Cabin* made this impression on a whole population; neither was it any quality of soul that it revealed, nor even its skill in the narration of incidents. The book dealt with actualities that were perceived and felt and present behind every word that was written. Separated from the circumstances which gave it birth, it loses much of its life; but it will remain one of the notable books of the century as embodying its growing spirit of justice and humanity.

The first serious work to which Mrs. Stowe set

herself after the completion of *Uncle Tom* was the preparation of the 'Key,' which contained the facts by which she justified her descriptions. It was not to be supposed that all the world believed what she had written. She was assailed by storms of bitter invective. In the South were many humane and cultivated people, trained in patriarchal ideas, who exclaimed vehemently against what they regarded as her exaggerations and misrepresentations. Her reply to them was that without their qualifying humanity the system must long since have perished, and that the responsibility of maintaining it, with all its abominations, was in part upon them.

In 1856 appeared *Dred*, in which she resumed her argument against slavery as dragging down the Christian standard and corrupting the churches. She herself always spoke of *Uncle Tom* as a God-given book, and during the writing of *Dred*, she tells us, she prayed night and day. One hundred thousand copies were sold in four weeks. A second visit to England followed, and a third a year or two later, which was extended to Italy.

Then came the great war so long foreseen, so desolating in its progress, so revolutionary in its results. One of the incidents of this period was an appeal to the women of England, whose attitude disappointed her, and whose more practical sympathy she earnestly craved. At Gettysburg, one of her sons who had been among the first of the Massachusetts volunteers, was wounded, and so wounded by an injury to the brain that he was never himself again.

Her private life was, for years onward, filled with philanthropies, with correspondence, with the incidents of home change, with simple duties as of old, and with the fulfilment of literary schemes, as opportunity allowed. Much of her writing must be regarded as fugitive, not so her influence that wrought unseen. The ideas and schemes she propounded, her comments on passing things, were every-day testimony to the vigour and breadth of her mind. Few women have lived a life of such various activity, served more cheerfully in the homeliest duties, or responded with greater courage to the public call.

Her last years were spent in Florida, where she had set up a home at first for her wounded son. In 1886 Professor Stowe died. She was then bending under the strain of seventy-six years. She lived on to the age of eighty-five. A great calm seemed to fall upon her. Her mind gradually lost its grasp, 'She became like a lost child,' wandering about, pleased with flowers, fresh air, the sound of a piano, or a voice singing hymns, but the busy inspiring spirit was asleep.

In one of her later letters, referring to Professor Stowe's reading of the life and diary of John Quincy Adams, one of the noblest of American statesmen, her anti-slavery passion flames again, as she writes of his time :

'All, all are gone. All that raged ; all that threatened ; all the cowards that yielded ; truckled, sold their country for a mess of pottage ; all the *men* that stood and bore infamy and scorn for the truth—all are silent in dust ; the fight is over ; but eternity will never

efface from their souls whether they did well or ill, whether they fought bravely or failed like cowards. In a sense, our lives are irreparable. If we shrink, if we fail, if we choose the fleeting instead of the eternal, God may forgive us ; but there must be an eternal regret. This man lived for humanity when hardest bestead, for truth when truth was unpopular ; for Christ when Christ stood chained and scourged in the person of the slave.'

CHAPTER XLI

WILLIAM LLOYD GARRISON

THERE are some ominous silences in American literature—times when one listens in vain for the tones of that passionate heart with which the Hebrew prophets spoke of the down-trodden. The sweet-voiced, pure-minded, tender-hearted Longfellow cried out to Channing :—

Go on, until this land revokes
The old and chartered Lie,
The feudal curse, whose whips and yokes
Insult humanity.

He gave his 'Warning'—

There is a poor blind Samson in this land,
Shorn of his strength and bound in bonds of steel,
Who may, in some grim revel, raise his hand
And shake the pillars of this Commonweal,
Till the vast temple of our liberties,
A shapeless mass of wreck and rubbish lies.

He pictured 'the Good Part that shall not be taken away' in his verses on the Schoolmistress, who had given up all to break the bands of those who served her, and who used to read to the village girls—

At eventide
Of One who came to save;
To cast the captives' chains aside,
And liberate the slave.

We wonder whether she was Margaret Mercer of Maryland, who, long before emancipation, set free all her slaves, and earned her own living as a teacher.¹ But beyond these 'Poems on Slavery,' written in 1843 at sea during a voyage home from Europe, Longfellow gave his generation nothing on the subject worthy of the time through which he lived. Lowell was a stern preacher of righteousness; Whittier followed every stage of the struggle in quick-pulsing sympathy.

The undercurrents that divided Northern thought, and kept men silent, are curiously illustrated in an incident narrated by Levi Coffin. In Cincinnati, after the war began, there was a union prayer-meeting for business men from eight to nine o'clock every morning. A prominent citizen presided, and he was expected to stop with his mallet any one who touched upon controverted points. A Friend objected that the real cause of the war was never alluded to—that every sin was mentioned, but not slavery. One day he ventured

¹ Another schoolmistress has place in the history—Prudence Crandall, a Quaker lady of Connecticut, who had a school for the higher education of girls. She gave offence by teaching a girl of colour, and replied to remonstrances by determining to change her pupils and teach coloured girls exclusively. The State legislature passed a law forbidding private schools for non-resident coloured persons; she was arrested, but freed by the supreme court. Rotten eggs and stones were hurled at her house; it was even fired; her friends were forbidden to visit her; she and her coloured pupils were shut out from the meeting-house; and after months of persecution a disturbance put an end to the school.

a protest, and when the mallet tapped sharply two or three times, instead of sitting down, he broke into prayer, and poured forth his whole soul. 'Brother,' said Horace Bushnell, as he grasped him afterwards by the hand, 'you drove in the nail, and then you clinched it, and they can't get it out.'

The man of unfettered speech was William Lloyd Garrison. It so happened that Garrison was in London at the time of Wilberforce's death; he was present at the burial in Westminster Abbey, and walked with George Thompson in the train of mourners behind princes and statesmen, Wellington, Buxton, and the country's noblest array. It was a remarkable coincidence that brought him, a hounded man, to England at this moment, and gave him the encouragement of witnessing the passage of the Emancipation Bill. He had come to protest against the American Colonisation Society, which was diverting attention from the larger issue, and making Liberia the goal of a delusive movement for the redemption of the negro race, while it left the condition of the mass of slaves untouched. Wilberforce, in a long interview, had given him his entire sympathy. 'His pygmean dimensions,' wrote Garrison, 'would have excited feelings almost bordering on the ludicrous, if we had not instantly been struck with admiration to think that so small a body could contain so large a mind.' Clarkson, who was then almost blind, met him with deep emotion; he had given support to the colonisation scheme, but now withdrew it. Daniel O'Connell, who had been throughout one of the most eloquent champions of

freedom, had suggested a meeting at Exeter Hall, and came himself. Garrison had cited O'Connell's vehement rebuke of the excuse that England had established and encouraged American slavery. O'Connell, when he rose, 'threw off a magnificent speech, as he threw off his coat.' His words leaped as the branches rustle and toss to a wind. 'I tear down the image of liberty from the recreant land of America. . . . I tell the black man that the time of his emancipation is come, and the oppressor that the period of his injustice is terminated.'

Garrison sprang from an impoverished family. Newburyport, Massachusetts, was his birthplace; he was shoemaker, cabinetmaker, and then printer. His active mind soon found expression; he began to write; and edited a succession of papers, all with a social bent. Three ideas possessed him: he would fight intemperance, war, and slavery. He had ready speech, and spoke with great force on these subjects. The man who at the first most influenced him was Benjamin Lundy, a Quaker, who gave his life to the cause of the slaves, and walked thousands of miles to form societies on their behalf. The first was named 'The Union Humane Society.' His spirit had been stirred by the frequent sight of 'coffles' of chained slaves being driven to the Southern market. One of Garrison's early contributors was an unknown lad, whose first verses so impressed him that he went in search of him; he found him at work barefooted in the field, clad only in shirt, pantaloons, and straw hat; by sewing slippers on the shoemaker's bench, the young man earned money to

pay for his lessons at the Academy ; his name was Whittier.

As Garrison advanced, he became more aggressive ; he came slowly to the conclusion that the only effectual cure for the wrongs he saw every day was immediate emancipation. He found that fully fifty thousand slaves a year were sold and transported from one State to another ; and he mentioned one ship, as a recent example, which had sailed from his own town to New Orleans, carrying seventy-five chained between decks, and, while rebuking the merchants who thus made riches, he gave the owner's name. For stating the fact he was charged with 'a gross and malicious libel,' and sent, being unable to pay the fine imposed, to Baltimore gaol. On the wall of his cell he wrote this sonnet :—

High walls and huge the Body may confine,
 And iron gates obstruct the prisoner's gaze,
 And massive bolts may baffle his design,
 And vigilant keepers watch his devious ways ;
 Yet scorns th' immortal Mind this base control !
 No chains can bind it, and no cell enclose :
 Swifter than light it flies from pole to pole,
 And in a flash from earth to heaven it goes !
 It leaps from mount to mount—from vale to vale
 It wanders, plucking honeyed fruit and flowers ;
 It visits home to hear the fireside tale,
 Or in sweet converse pass the joyous hours ;
 'Tis up before the sun, roaming afar,
 And in its watches wearies the evening star.

Garrison had nearly completed his seventh week in prison, when a New York merchant intervened and

paid the fine. When he came out he started a weekly paper of his own, called *The Liberator*. A friend, as poor as himself, joined with him; they had neither types, press, nor office, nor any money, but they contrived the ways and means, and by hard labour launched it. *The Liberator* soon became almost too famous; an outbreak in Virginia, causing panic, roused the most bitter passions. Garrison was denounced as an incendiary; the suppression of the paper was demanded; his life was threatened. The Senate of Georgia offered five thousand dollars to any one who would secure the arrest and conviction of the editor or publisher. The fiendish temper of those times, bred of slavery, showed in the punishment meted to the handful of Virginian rebels. 'The deluded "prophet," more fortunate than some of his followers, was hung; *their* flesh was burnt with red-hot irons, their faces mutilated, their jaws broken asunder and then set up as a mark to shoot at, their hamstrings cut, their bodies stuck like hogs, their heads spiked to the whipping-post.' This was the terrorism of slave-rule, the ferocity of cowardice, which every insurrection of slaves has seemed to call out. When Garrison crossed to England it was not a day too soon; he was followed to the coast, and had sometimes to hide.

On his returning to America, his first work was to organise an American Anti-Slavery Society. He had previously set going a New England Society; and there were many smaller societies at work—probably more than a hundred might have been counted.¹ His

¹ Russell Lowell, as far back as 1846, contributed to the *Daily News*,

home was now in Boston ; but the convention which he called met at Philadelphia (1833). From ten States there came between fifty and sixty delegates ; the majority of them were young men ; there were but two or three coloured men. Garrison drew up the Declaration of Sentiments. Its basis was Immediate Emancipation. 'It is not wronging the master ; it is righting the slave—restoring him to himself.' It is noticeable how often, in the earlier discussions, an appeal was made to the famous sentence which preceded the Declaration of Independence. We see that there was living power in it, though later generations have thought it academic and dead.

In the political world, the first point to which the abolitionists directed their attack was the district of Columbia, over which, as containing Washington, Congress itself had power ; but when petitions multiplied, Congress refused to discuss them. This 'gagging,' as it was called, roused angry remonstrance, and helped forward the formation of a party distinctly hostile to slavery.

The multiplication of anti-slavery societies was a part of the new programme. Their promoters eschewed all force ; they relied on 'moral suasion.' There came, however, a time of turbulence. A mob had waited for Garrison at New York, when he landed from England ; they charged him with maligning his countrymen—they (February, March, April, May), with the condition that his name was 'not to appear,' four papers on 'Anti-Slavery' in the United States, which brought the history down to Garrison. He names Maria Chapman, Phillips, Quincy, and Abbey Kelley, for 'niches in the Valhalla of America.'

were angry at O'Connell's speech. He lectured, but his lectures roused opposition. A furious crowd broke in upon him at Boston, and he narrowly escaped with his life. A gallows was erected in front of his house. *The Liberator* was as disturbing as the famous red flag of revolution; year after year he sustained it, though sometimes it seemed nigh to being overborne. For thirty years it pursued its stormy way; it was unsparing in its exposures, scathing in its denunciations, violent in its invective. There were threatening riots in many towns; copies were stopped in the post offices; at Charleston the mob seized the mail, and burnt in the open square what copies it could capture. Punishments were devised to check its circulation, but it neither feared nor surrendered. Garrison was angered by the cautious silence of the churches; somebody had dared to object that to speak against slavery on the Sabbath was a breach of the holy day! He met all questions with an open mind, and time drew him gradually into controversies which led him far from the standing ground of his first faith. His contemporaries could not measure the effects of a tumultuous argument thus protracted; but it left none in ignorance; the claim of the slave as man was brought before every State, the iniquities of the established system were no longer veiled. One thing is clear—those two words alone, *Immediate Emancipation*, in the forefront all these years, were enough to explain the virulence of the conflict; they were a challenge to all the old traditions, to the South they meant immediate confiscation, for the ways and means of a compensating arrangement were not in sight.

The idea was no new one ; it lay in reality behind the simple, practical advices of Woolman ; it might be quietly discussed as it related to individual action, but when it loomed as a general policy the whole position changed. The phrase was variously interpreted, and with every decade it seemed to arouse more bitter feeling, not a few who were opposed to slavery regarding it as anarchic in its disregard of means and times. Thus we find even so large-hearted a man as Channing complaining, in 1838, that the form the agitation had then taken had alarmed the considerate, and 'strengthened the sympathies of the free States with the slave-holders.' There were, on the other side, those who argued for slavery almost as if it were a divine right.

Yet Garrison wrote : ' Much as I detest the oppression exercised by the southern slave-holder, he is a man, sacred before me.' There was a time when he looked towards the dissolution of the Union as the 'one honest, straightforward course,' if they would see the slave power overthrown.¹

¹ *Life of William Lloyd Garrison*, by his Sons.

CHAPTER XLII

JOHN BROWN

JOHN BROWN came of the Puritan stock which President Roosevelt has described as carrying into the western wilds the ideals which have made America great. The song which the northern soldiers sang in the Civil War—

John Brown's body lies a-mould'ring in the grave,
But his soul goes marching on,—

has not only carried his fame far, but seems to give him place in that perpetual conflict against the tyrannies of evil to which every generation in turn is called. A recent historian has described his crowning deed as 'the mad folly of an almost crazed fanatic,' but whatever the final judgment, it was an act done in the name of freedom which made multitudes mourn him as a hero.¹

The Far West was an undeveloped land when John

¹ The chief authority for the facts of his life is Sanborn's biography—for Sanborn was with him at critical periods; but we are mainly indebted in this sketch, by Mr. Unwin's permission, to a later volume which has collated statements—*Captain John Brown, of Harper's Ferry*, by John Newton.



JOHN BROWN OF HARPER'S FERRY.

Brown made acquaintance with it. Born in 1800, he made his mark on a great time, but did not live to see the America which we know, of ever-accumulating wealth and of cosmopolitan power. He was but five years old when his father moved from Torrington, Connecticut, where he was born, to Hudson, Ohio. In one of Brown's own letters, written in later years to a young friend, we get a glimpse of his boyhood. Ohio was then 'a wilderness filled with wild beasts and Indians.' As a child, he learnt to drive cows and ride horses; he dressed deerskins, captured birds and squirrels, wandered about through the woods, or made acquaintance with the camps of Indians. His school was out of doors, and he grew up hardy and self-reliant. At twelve, he took a drove of cattle a hundred miles, single-handed. There was war with England at that time, and as a youth he saw, in the company of his father, a good deal of military life. He was fond of reading, and taught from earliest childhood to 'fear God and keep His commandments.' The Bible was a familiar book, and as convictions deepened, his first thought was of the ministry, for which he began to prepare. From this purpose he was turned by a prolonged inflammation of the eyes, which compelled him to give up his studies. Then, with the adaptedness to circumstance which is a virtue in unsettled countries, he followed first one calling and then another, in such work as comes naturally to a pioneer. Difficulties did not deter him, nor poverty depress. As a wool-merchant he visited England, and passed over to France and Germany. The wool business failed. He became bankrupt, speedily obtain-

ing his discharge, but with the conscientiousness which had marked his trading, wrote to each creditor, promising to pay debt and interest from time to time, 'as divine Providence shall enable me to do'—a promise faithfully kept.

Throughout all these changes there grew upon him the belief that he was 'called of God to action against slavery.' He speaks at an early period of 'the constant ringing in my ears of the despairing cry of millions whose woes none but God knows.' It so happened that Gerrit Smith, of New York, one of the most energetic champions of the oppressed, and a senator, was offering tracts of land in the Adirondack Mountains to coloured settlers, a preference being given to escaped slaves. Brown thought that he might find and shelter men here to help him in his plans; moreover, he heard that the first settlers had been cheated by a dishonest surveyor; and he wrote, proposing to take a farm, clear, and plant it, give employment to the negroes, show them how to work, and be a kind of father to them. Smith readily fell in with the proposal. The experiment met with no sufficient response, but the farm to which the Browns migrated, in 1849, became known as North Elba. Wherever Brown might be, here was his home; from it he went southward to Kansas, and thither, from the gallows, his body was brought to be buried. Mr. Higginson has described the spot. 'Through the most difficult of wood paths, and after a half-mile of forest, you come out upon a clearing. There is a little farmhouse, unpainted, set in a girdle of black stumps, and

with all heaven about it for a wider girdle ; on a high hill-side, forests on the north and west, the glorious line of the Adirondacks on the east, and on the south one slender road leading off to Westport, a road so straight that you could sight a U.S. marshal for five miles.'

In a letter addressed to his wife a few years earlier we get a glimpse of the man as he was in the midst of his family. He regrets that he has lived so many years and done so little to increase the amount of human happiness.

'I often regret,' he adds, 'that my manner is no more kind and affectionate to those I really love and esteem. . . . I will close by saying that it is my growing resolution to endeavour to promote my own happiness by doing what I can to render those about me more so. If the large boys do wrong, call them alone into your room, and expostulate with them kindly, and see if you cannot reach them by a kind but powerful appeal to their honour. I do not claim that such a theory accords very well with my practice—I frankly confess it does not, but I want your face to shine, even if my own should be dark and cloudy.'

Brown was twice married. His sons caught his spirit, and three of them died in the same cause. The eldest son John relates an experience which strangely blends the stern and tender.

'He says he was first put to the tanning business, and for three years his chief duty was to attend to the grinding of bark with a blind horse. Boy-like, he took spells of play when his father was absent, and frequently forgot to supply the machine with the necessary bark.

"But the creaking of the hungry mill would betray my neglect, and then father, hearing this from below, would come up and stealthily pounce upon me while at a window looking upon outside attractions. He finally grew tired of these frequent slight admonitions for my laziness and other shortcomings, and concluded to adopt with me a sort of book account something like this:—

"John, Dr.

For disobeying mother . . . 8 lashes.

For unfaithfulness at work . . . 3 „

For telling a lie 8 „

"This account he showed me from time to time. On a certain Sunday morning he invited me to accompany him from the house to the tannery, saying that he concluded that it was time for a settlement. We went into the upper or finishing room, and after a long and tearful talk over my faults he again showed me my account, which exhibited a fearful footing up of *debts*. I had no credits or off-sets, and was of course bankrupt. I then paid about *one-third* of the debt, reckoned in strokes from a nicely-prepared blue-beech switch, laid on 'masterly.' Then, to my utter astonishment, father stripped off his shirt, and seating himself on a block, gave me the whip and bade me 'lay it on' to his bare back. I dared not refuse to obey, but at first I did not strike hard. 'Harder,' he said, 'harder! harder!' *until he received the balance of the account.* Small drops of blood showed on his back where the tip end of the tingling beech cut through. Thus ended the account and the settlement." "

The prominence given to local and personal incidents and to State controversies has sometimes diverted attention from the larger mischiefs of slavery. The spirit within it, which would strangle souls or nations, was but half-perceived in either North or South. Yet, even as late as 1858, we find Theodore Parker writing in a letter—

‘The slave power pushes things on rapidly. In Virginia the court decides that a slave has no legal rights to *choice*. A woman left money to her slaves on condition that they would be emancipated by *their consent*. The court decided against the will; so the slaves get neither freedom nor money. Louisiana has just passed a law [as Carolina and Georgia had done years before] forbidding free blacks to come in, and banishing all who are there now against the law. If they are found after July, 1859, they are to be sold as *slaves for ever*.’

This exclusion of free blacks was due to fear, caused in some instances by the insurrectionary appeals made to them to take up the cause of the slave.

It is necessary to remember these things if we would understand the intensity of feeling and sternness of resolution which governed John Brown.

The contest in Kansas quickly developed into a murderous struggle. The Missourians formed secret organisations along the eastern border, and prompted by prominent citizens, sent bodies of men across who held bogus meetings as settlers; and when the time came for the election of a delegate to Congress, they rushed into Kansas, armed with swords, revolvers, and

rifles, took possession of half the polling stations, and allowed no one to vote who was known to be a Free Soiler. The same tactics were repeated, with even greater violence, on the election some months later of the first Territorial Legislature. Five thousand Missourians, armed to the teeth, crossed the border. Of the 6218 votes cast into the ballot-boxes, 4908 were afterwards found to be illegal. Every slave candidate but one was elected. The new legislature hastened to adopt the 'Revised Statutes of Missouri,' and added an 'Act to punish offences against slave property.' It prescribed death for assisting a slave to escape; ten years' imprisonment for concealing a fugitive slave; five years for printing anything that might incite a slave to escape. To deny the right of holding slaves by speaking, writing, or circulating paper or book was to risk two years in gaol. The man who when challenged would not swear to support the Fugitive Slave Law was to be disqualified from voting. Nothing could have more clearly shown the blind barbaric spirit engendered by the system. The *bonâ fide* citizens responded by calling a State Convention, but President Pierce would not recognise it as legal. Before the year was out three Free State citizens had been murdered. Not many months passed before Lawrence, the headquarters of a small community of Free Soilers, some of them emigrants from the North, was attacked and looted.

Meanwhile, John Brown had arrived. Four of his sons had settled in Kansas, and wrote asking him to come to their help, and bring arms, for they had come

without them as settlers bent on peace. These stormy scenes gave colour to all his after years, and brought him to stern determinations. The only political meeting he attended in Kansas was one which would have made it a 'Free *White* State,'—a proposition which he denounced as an infringement on negro rights. For a while he took up his abode with his sons, and a knot of anti-slavery men gathered round him as a leader. There were rumours of an impending attack. He went out as on a surveying expedition, and found out the facts. It was agreed to seize the leaders when they appeared, and try them by Lynch law. The ruffians came, five of them were captured, tried, and put to death on the spot. Brown had no hand in that act, but he never disavowed the responsibility for it. Was it fanaticism that made him regard himself as God's instrument? The Cromwellian spirit, which shows in the pocket-Bible of the Ironsides, has the same note.

Brown had once organised an armed resistance to the Fugitive Slave Law. When in England he had consulted friends as to whether they would favour a forcible liberation of slaves, and was advised not to attempt it. Had he a touch of madness in him, as many thought when they saw the disproportion between his means and his purposes? or had he a larger belief than common men in the forces which work to great ends by hidden means? 'Weigh Hannibal,' said Juvenal, but where are the human scales that can weigh a soul? The father and sons now took to the woods, where they were joined by a

few of the bolder spirits. One who visited their camp has described its strict Puritan rule, and the prayers offered morning and night. The Missourians were still rampant, and laid violent hands on Brown's little town of Ossawatimie, which was sacked, and subjected to many barbarities. Lawrence also was again attacked. Brown was the leader of the defence, and recognised by his assailants in those various skirmishes as a formidable foe. In the summer of 1857 he left Kansas with the object of awakening sympathy elsewhere, and visited Boston, Concord, and other places, seeing many of the abolitionist leaders. For another two years the struggle was maintained in Kansas, coming to an end only in 1859, when the political situation having changed, an overwhelming majority of the settlers rejected the Slave Constitution.

As Brown's plans took more definite shape, he started a military training-school at Tabor, in Iowa, hoping there to drill young men who might aid him. His idea was to call out the slaves in peaceful insurrection, and to lead them to the mountains or other secure places, and there hold them till the government ensured them freedom. He seems to have taken no account of the inertia which comes with hereditary servitude ; nor does he appear to have made any adequate calculation of the resources which so vast an undertaking would demand ; nor did the risks of a servile war, with its attendant savagery, occur to him. He writhed under the wrongs that time so slowly cures ; the lawlessness that surrounded and confronted him tempted him to desperate action. There were said to be already

40,000 escaped slaves in Canada, and he next went northward to secure their co-operation. At a secret convention in one of the negro churches, he presented a 'Provisional Constitution' of forty-eight articles, which was designed to preserve order among the slaves during the transitional period. One of the articles stipulated that they did not wish to overthrow the settled government of any State; another declared that they looked to no dissolution of the Union, but simply to the amendment and repeal of laws. Forty-four persons, all save a few being black, signed this document. Men like Gerrit Smith, and other abolitionists in whom he had confided, saw the hopelessness of this dream, and sent to warn him. The next day Brown answered by letter:—

'I have only had this one opportunity in a life of nearly sixty years. . . . God has honoured but comparatively a very small part of mankind with any possible chance for such mighty and soul-satisfying rewards. . . . I expect nothing but to endure hardness, but I expect to effect a mighty conquest, *even though it be like the last victory of Samson.*'

To another correspondent we find him saying that for twenty years he had never made any business arrangement which would prevent him at any time from answering the call of the Lord.

Missourian bands were still harassing Kansas when he returned. He bethought him that an invasion of their own territory might check them. Collecting a small body he dashed across the border, and captured eleven slaves. The act spread consternation, and in a

few days not a slave was to be seen in the border counties. A few had escaped, others had been hurried away into safer quarters. A price was set upon his head (3250 dollars), but he determined himself to convoy these slaves into the freedom of Canada. It was a journey of 2500 miles; and the Fugitive Slaves Act was in force, but he defied it, and came back unharmed.

A greatly daring movement was now in contemplation. Harper's Ferry was a town of five thousand inhabitants, in Jefferson County, Virginia, on the borders of Maryland, at the confluence of the Potomac and Shenandoah Rivers, and here was the national armoury of the United States, where usually was stored from one to two hundred thousand stand of arms. Brown thought he could capture it, and resolved to make it his first rallying point. Kagi, a young barrister, of Swiss descent, said to be the most intellectual of the men whom he inspired, secretary at the convention in Canada, has described the project as it loomed in their early conversations. Brown spoke of a chain of counties over which he had himself travelled in South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi, where, with the assistance of Canadian negroes who had escaped from these regions, the slaves would combine, and move to the mountains. They were to be supplied with arms from the arsenal, and fed with provisions taken from the farms of the oppressors. They were to be directed and held in control by a central organisation. Brown took a farm in Virginia, about five miles from Harper's Ferry,

from which he surveyed the mountains, and where he secretly gathered his band ; and he established a small depot within a day's journey. In October, 1859, he invited Frederick Douglass to an interview, and he came, bringing with him Shields Green, a fugitive slave from South Carolina. They met in an old stone quarry—these four, Brown, Douglass, Kagi, and Green. The account which Douglass gives is the clearest we have of Brown's own feeling :—

‘The taking of Harper's Ferry, of which Brown had merely hinted before, was now declared his settled purpose, and he wanted to know what I thought about it. I at once opposed it with all the arguments at my command. To me such a measure would be fatal to running off slaves, and fatal to all engaged. It would be an attack on the Federal Government, and would array the whole country against us. Captain Brown did most of the talking on the other side. He did not at all object to rousing the nation ; it seemed to him that something startling was needed. He had completely renounced his old plan, and thought that the capture of Harper's Ferry would serve as notice to the slaves that their friends had come, and as a trumpet to rally them to his standard.’

Brown himself, on his trial, disclaimed the idea of an armed insurrection. Arms were an essential of any movement, if only for defence ; he had relied on the North for arms in repelling the Missourians ; but the party which attacked the armoury had made no preparation for their removal.

Nothing but the confidence of an overwhelming

hope could have given a colour of reason to these plans. Where was their sanity? There was the impulse of a Balaclava charge in the attack. The little band who essayed this desperate enterprise numbered scarcely more than a score, five of whom were blacks. They sallied forth on a cold, dark night—Sunday, October 16, 1859. A one-horse waggon sufficed to carry pikes and other implements. The telegraph wires were cut, all lights turned out, the watchman on the bridge and three watchmen at the armoury seized. The door was burst open with a crowbar; before an alarm could be raised the arsenal and rifle factory were also in Brown's possession. Soon after midnight, the train from Washington was due to cross the bridge; it was detained a few hours, and then allowed to pass, without injury to the passengers. The first act of the strategy was to seize Colonel Washington and certain prominent slave-holders as hostages. With the morning light every townsman was arrested as he appeared in the streets; and several bodies of slaves were freed. Till noon on the Monday Brown was master of the town. But by mid-day the Militia from Charlestown had arrived, and as volunteers also gathered, his men found themselves overwhelmed, and had to retreat to the armoury, and finally take refuge in the engine-house, with ten of their selected prisoners. There was no rising from without to help them. In the evening a body of fifty tried to carry the engine-house, but Brown stood firm and they were beaten back. A frenzy of brutal hate raged outside. All through the night that

followed, Brown's voice could be heard at intervals, 'Are you awake, men?' 'Are you ready?' Early the next morning there was another assault and an entrance forced. Brown was struck over the head with a sword and bayoneted. Of his band of twenty-two, ten were killed, seven were made prisoners, tried, and hanged, and only five escaped.

Governor Wise was one of the first to see Brown after his committal to Charlestown gaol, and on his return to Richmond he gave his impressions of the man :—

'They are themselves mistaken who take him to be a madman. He is a bundle of the best nerves I ever saw, cut and thrust and bleeding and in bonds. He is a man of clear head, of courage, fortitude, and simple ingenuousness. He is cool, collected, and indomitable, and it is but just to him to say that he was humane to his prisoners, . . . and he inspired me with great trust in his integrity as a man of truth.

'Colonel Washington says that he—Brown—was the coolest and firmest man he ever saw in defying danger and death. With one son dead by his side and another shot through, he felt the pulse of his dying son with one hand and held his rifle with the other, and commanded his men with the utmost composure.'

The trial could have but one result. He was found guilty of treason, and sentenced to death. While he tranquilly awaited his doom, martial law was proclaimed. When his wife came to say farewell, she had an escort of dragoons, and walked to his cell

between files of bayonets, while cannon frowned near by. His letters in those last days have the tone of unshaken faith ; they are calm and even cheerful, full of kindly thought and common sense. Here is a passage from a letter to his wife, remarkable as written by a man under sentence of death :—

‘You, my wife, well know that I have always expressed a decided preference for a very plain but perfectly practical education for both sons and daughters. I do not mean an education so very miserable as that you and I received in early life, nor as some of our children enjoyed. When I say plain but practical, I mean enough of the learning of the schools to enable them to transact the common business of life, together with that thorough training in good business habits which best prepares both men and women to be useful though poor, and to meet the stern realities of life with a good grace. You know well that I always claimed that the music of the broom, wash-tub, needle, spindle, loom, axe, scythe, hoe, flail, etc., should first be learned at all events, and that of the piano, etc., afterwards. I put them in that order as most conducive to health of body and mind ; and for obvious reasons, that, after a life of some experience and much observation, I have found ten women as well as ten men who have made their mark in life right, whose early training was of that plain, practical kind, to one who had a more popular and fashionable early training.’

In a still later letter to his wife and children, he says :—

‘I beseech you all to live in habitual contentment with moderate circumstances and gains of worldly store, and earnestly to teach this to your children and children’s children after you by example as well as by precept.’

And at the same time he most earnestly pleads with them to make the Bible their study, and prove its truths.

Friday, December 2, 1859, was the day of death. Sentries and patrols guarded the roads for miles around. As he passed to the scaffold his eye ranged over the landscape. ‘This is a beautiful country,’ he remarked. ‘I have not cast my eyes over it before—that is while passing through the field.’ General sympathy greeted the little party that bore the body home to North Elba. There it was laid in the spot chosen by himself, at the foot of a rock about fifteen yards from his door. The hymn with which he had often lulled his little ones to sleep was sung—‘Blow ye the trumpet, blow.’

The words of Wendell Phillips over the grave glowed with the strong feeling of the hour:—

‘*He has abolished slavery in Virginia.* . . . True, the slave is still there. So, when the tempest uproots a pine on our hills, it looks green for months, a year or two. Still it is timber, not a tree. Thus has John Brown loosened the roots of the slave system.’

As he passed from the prison, he had given a slip of paper to the officials, containing his last written words:—

‘I, John Brown, am now quite *certain* that the

crimes of this *guilty land* will never be purged away but with *blood*. I had, as I now think vainly, flattered myself that without very much bloodshed it might be done.'

No one could precisely say what was the effect of John Brown's action in determining events; but it wrought upon public feeling with immense influence. The aggressive spirits of the North hailed him as hero and martyr. The populace were moved by his devotion and courage.

The song which best embodied the Northern feeling seems to have originated in Boston, where it was first sung by a contingent of Boston Volunteers who were marching through the street to the front either at the end of 1861 or at the beginning of 1862. It resembles in rhythmical structure the improvised songs of the negroes which Wallace heard in Brazil, but it has the note of a stronger race:—

John Brown's body lies a-mould'ring in the grave,
 John Brown's body lies a-mould'ring in the grave,
 John Brown's body lies a-mould'ring in the grave,
 But his soul goes marching on.

Glory, glory, Hallelujah,
 Glory, glory, Hallelujah,
 Glory, glory, Hallelujah,
 His soul goes marching on.

He captured Harper's Ferry with his nineteen men so true,
 And he frightened old Virginia till she trembled through and through,

They hung him for a traitor, themselves the traitor crew,
But his soul goes marching on.

Glory, glory, Hallelujah,
Glory, glory, Hallelujah,
Glory, glory, Hallelujah,
His soul goes marching on.

John Brown died that the slave might be free,
John Brown died that the slave might be free,
John Brown died that the slave might be free,
But his soul goes marching on.

Glory, glory, Hallelujah,
Glory, glory, Hallelujah,
Glory, glory, Hallelujah,
His soul goes marching on.

Now has come the glorious jubilee,
Now has come the glorious jubilee,
Now has come the glorious jubilee,
When all mankind are free.

Glory, glory, Hallelujah,
Glory, glory, Hallelujah,
Glory, glory, Hallelujah,
His soul goes marching on.

When the war drew to its close, with the fall of
Richmond, a black regiment was the first to enter the
long-beleaguered city, and it did so with its band
playing 'John Brown's Body.'¹

¹ *Abraham Lincoln*, by Charles G. Leland.

CHAPTER XLIII

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

LIFE may be given in many ways,
And loyalty to Truth be sealed
As bravely in the closet as the field,
So bountiful is Fate ;
But then to stand beside her
When craven churls deride her,
To front a lie in arms and not to yield,
This shows, methinks, God's plan
And measure of a stalwart man,
Limbed like the old heroic breeds
Who stand self-poised on manhood's solid earth,
Not forced to frame excuses for his birth,
Fed from within with all the strength he needs.

Such was he, our Martyr-Chief,
Whom late, the nation he had led,
With ashes on her head,
Wept with the passion of an angry grief.

Nature, they say, doth dote,
And cannot make a man,
Save in some worn-out plan
Repeating as by rote :
For him, her Old World moulds aside she threw,
And, choosing sweet clay from the breast
Of the unexhausted West,

With stuff untainted shaped a hero new,
Wise, steadfast in the strength of God, and true.

Great captains, with their guns and drums,
Disturb our judgment for the hour,
But at last silence comes ;
These all are gone, and standing like a tower,
Our children shall behold his fame,
The kindly-earnest, brave, foreseeing man,
Sagacious, patient, dreading praise—not blame ;
New birth of our new soil, the first American.

So wrote Lowell, one of the earlier champions of Freedom, of Abraham Lincoln in the Harvard Commemoration Ode of 1865. This 'first American,' when he became president, was, as Nicolay, his private secretary and biographer, describes him, 'then 51 years of age, 6 feet 4 inches in height, weighed 12 stone 7 pounds, and for his unusual stature was remarkably well proportioned ; his hair was black ; his eyes grey, his rather thin but mobile features were strongly marked, with very prominent eyebrows and high cheek-bones.' Leland tells how he could carry six hundred pounds with ease, and once, after the fashion of Samson with the gates of Gaza, 'picked up some huge posts which four men were about to lift, and bore them away with little effort.' All the world knows his earlier history, the log-hut without floor or window or door which was his home, the ferry where he earned a pittance, the lively incidents of his struggling youth—'rail-splitter,' as they called him,—surveyor, postmaster, volunteer,—his choice of the Law as a calling, his incisive common sense, his inexhaustible drolleries, his succession of

debates with Douglas, 'the little giant,' who advocated the 'Squatters' Sovereignty,'—and his steady advances in political influence, till the time of his nomination as President, at the crisis of his country's history. So far he had trodden a road which many had trodden before him, but it led him beyond the reach of common ambitions to the most stupendous responsibilities that could fall upon a man. Then it was that his full stature was seen, the reach of his thought, the strength of his will; he grew with the growth of great demands, the solemnity of a time that loomed tempestuously fell upon his spirit.

The chief assailants of slavery had been men of peace. War was to them as great an evil—another tyranny. It seemed a strange adversity that made the man to whom their hopes turned commander-in-chief of a huge army. The armies that Germany hurled upon France, the veteran forces of France herself, were not so greatly more than these hosts that seemed to spring from the ground in America. The thin roads widened into dusty plains as they marched southward. M'Clellan's army dragged its slow length along for fifty miles. Their battles were as terrible as any in the European record. Not Waterloo exceeded in its dead. Gettysburg, which stayed Lee's invasion of Pennsylvania, was prolonged for three days, and the killed and wounded and missing of Federals and Confederates together amounted to 59,000. In the battle of the Wilderness, which lasted for five days, Grant alone lost 54,551 men. Lincoln himself had, till Grant proved equal to complete command, to play

the part of a Moltke; he controlled movements, appointed to the chief posts, and decided questions of administration without number. Genial in council, he was resolute in decision. If nothing was too great, nothing was too small for him. Numberless little acts of kindness are told of him.

When emancipation came, it seemed like an irony that it should be brought about mainly by military necessity. Lincoln regarded slavery as a part of the constitution, but he hated it. He believed that it must perish, but he would not allow his generals to act prematurely. His speech when nominated for the Senate was never forgotten: 'A house divided against itself cannot stand. I believe this government cannot endure permanently half-slave and half-free. I do not expect the Union to be dissolved—I do not expect the house to fall—but I do expect it will cease to be divided. It will become all one thing or all the other.' And he then thought the tendency pointed towards the intrusion of slavery into all the States. At one time he inclined to schemes of compensation and colonisation, and made definite proposals to secure a peaceful solution. Now slavery was on everybody's tongue, but this was not in the first place a war for freedom, though that feeling grew to be a power with those who fought.

Lincoln had not been a week in office when the Confederate States sent commissioners to Washington to arrange for the secession they had so long contemplated; these were not received, and the next month saw the seizure by the South of Fort Sumter, near

Charlestown, which roused the North to instant war. The ideal of an American nation one and indivisible was not to be set aside. Europe at the first regarded the war as a struggle for power, with delusive pleas behind it; she honoured—and still honours—the finer qualities of men like Lee and Jackson who fought for the South, but has since perceived how much of true patriotism gave strength to the Northern movement. Lincoln's own view of the issue was never more clearly stated than in his letter to Horace Greely, written in the second year of the war:—

‘My paramount object is to save the Union, and not either save or destroy slavery. If I could save the Union without freeing any slave I would do it; if I could save it by freeing all the slaves I would do it; and if I could do it by freeing some and leaving others alone, I would also do that. What I do about slavery and the coloured race I do because I believe it helps to save this Union, and what I forbear I forbear because I do not believe it would help to save this Union. I shall do less whenever I shall believe what I am doing hurts the cause; and I shall do more whenever I believe doing more will help the cause. . . . I have here stated my purpose according to my views of official duty; and I intend no modification of my oft-repeated personal wish that all men everywhere could be free.’

It does not follow that the entire North took this view. As the Northern armies moved southward, fugitive slaves crowded about them; they were at first by many officers sent back to their plantations—it would have been no easy task to provide for them;

after a little, the order went forth that they were not to be returned. The Federal General Butler declared that if slaves were legal property, but employed against the government, they might be seized as 'contraband of war,'—an ingenious view which was so far recognised that slaves were afterwards commonly called 'contrabands.' A more aggressive step was taken when all slaves in the rebel service were offered freedom. Then negro regiments were formed. To a citizen of Louisiana who complained that the relations of master and slave were being disturbed, Lincoln wrote:— 'What would you do in my position? Would you drop the war where it is? or would you prosecute it in future with elder-stalk squirts charged with rose-water? Would you deal lighter blows rather than heavier ones? Would you give up the contest, leaving any available means unapplied. I am in no boastful mood. I shall not do more than I can, and I shall do all I can to save the government, which is my sworn duty, as well as my personal inclination. I shall do nothing in malice; what I deal with is too vast for malicious dealing.'¹

He was already pondering the next step; he saw things going, to use his own words, 'from bad to worse'; the 'end of the rope' seemed perilously near, when he counted the losses of men. What would be the effect of emancipation on the balance of powers? Driven along by the whirlwind which no one could control, he began to think of it—again to use his own phrase—'as a fit and necessary military measure.' At

¹ *Abraham Lincoln* By John G. Nicolay and John Hay.

last the moment seemed opportune, and he issued, September 22, 1862, an Emancipation Proclamation. It offered the loyal States the option of immediate or gradual emancipation, with help for colonisation if desired. Then came the decisive sentence :—

‘That on the first day of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, all persons held as slaves within any State, or designated part of a State, the people whereof shall be then in rebellion against the United States, shall be then thenceforward and forever free; and the Executive Government of the United States, including the military and naval authorities thereof, will recognise and maintain the freedom of such persons, and will do no act or acts to repress such persons, or any of them, in any efforts they may make for their actual freedom.’ This was preliminary—an announcement of intention: in his message to Congress at the close of the year, he elaborated his view, and pleaded for harmonious action. ‘In giving freedom to the slave,’ he said, ‘we assure freedom to the free.’ Then the final proclamation went forth, amidst great rejoicing, on ‘*The first day of January in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three.*’

In its full and final form the Emancipation Proclamation stood in the name of ‘Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States, by virtue of the power vested in him as Commander-in-chief of the Army and Navy of the United States, in time of actual armed rebellion,’ and announced it ‘as a fit and necessary war measure for suppressing the said rebellion.’ There

was no longer any hesitancy as to the employment of negro troops ; they became an integral part of the Northern army. It is still a charge made against John Brown that he risked the horrors of a servile war ; but these black soldiers were guilty of no atrocities ; their regiments were submissive to discipline ; and it is melancholy testimony to the part they bore that of 178,975 enrolled, 68,187 perished in the service of the North.

The response given by the people was evidence of the extent to which deeper feelings ruled ; the cautious neutralities were broken ; a higher sentiment mingled with the national life, and made the sacrifices exacted in every home easier and more sacred.

Loring Brace, himself an American and a student of social questions, bears emphatic testimony to the spirit prevailing at this crisis. Remarking that American statesmen seldom possessed the moral enthusiasm of the thousands who pressed forward to the ranks, he says : ' Those who knew the people at this time knew that in every company and regiment enlisting for the war there were men animated with an unquenchable enthusiasm for liberty and hatred of slavery. They loved the Union, indeed, but they loved it as the ideal of liberty for men of all races. A moral fervour burned through all classes of men at the North. The first regiments came from the most anti-slavery districts of the most religious communities. Many of the leaders were avowed abolitionists. The popular songs breathed the spirit of emancipation. A thousand pulpits pleaded the cause of the negro and

denounced slavery. The feeling had stamped itself deep into the hearts of the Northern people that slavery, as a great wrong and injustice, would injure the white and the whole country equally with the negro, and was against the laws of Providence.'

Thus we find Emerson, who had advocated the hopeless project of peaceably buying out slavery by a vast subscription which should unite all States and every citizen, speaking in another note, after Bull's Run, of the judgment of God that had come upon the people for their sins, and of the development in the struggle for freedom of a heroism and moral grandeur noble to see; 'he had despaired of the nation before, but now he saw a purpose and devotion real and sublime—the promise of a better time to come.'

We can but indicate the determining thoughts. It is written in a hundred books how the dread war went forward. More than two years had passed when Lincoln was called to a second term of office. He had himself propounded to his cabinet a project for offering the slave States a compensation of \$400,000,000 upon condition that all rebellion should cease before April, but not one of the cabinet approved it.¹ His Inaugural Address on again assuming the President's rôle is the most vivid picture we have of that awful time. In all the speeches of statesmen that the world has listened to, it would be difficult to find a more affecting passage than these closing words:—

'Neither party expected for the war the magnitude or the duration which it has already attained. Neither

¹ Hay and Nicolay.

anticipated that the cause of the conflict might cease with, or even before the conflict itself should cease. Each looked for an easier triumph, and a result less fundamental and astounding. Both read the same Bible and pray to the same God ; and each invokes His aid against the other. It may seem strange that any men should dare to ask a just God's assistance in wringing their bread from the sweat of other men's faces ; but let us judge not, that we be not judged. The prayers of both could not be answered—that of neither has been answered fully. The Almighty has His own purposes. “Woe unto the world because of offences ; for it must needs be that offences come ; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh.” If we shall suppose that American slavery is one of those offences which, in the providence of God, must needs come, but which having continued through His appointed time, He now wills to remove, and that He gives to both North and South this terrible war, as the woe due to those by whom the offence comes, shall we discern therein any departure from those divine attributes which the believers in a living God always ascribe to Him ? Fondly do we hope, fervently do we pray, that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet, if God wills that it continue until all the wealth piled up by the bondmen's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said, “The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.”

‘With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in ; to bind up the nation’s wounds ; to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan ; to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves, and with all nations.’

A month later all was changed. The army of the Potomac at last had won its victory ; Richmond was taken. Lincoln, at the summons of Grant, hastened to the South, and entered the captured city next day. He came attended only by his son and the sailors who had rowed him up the river. The negroes rushed round him with cries of wild delight. They wept aloud for joy ; they shouted, in chorus that rose and never fell, one long, continuous cry, ‘Glory, glory, glory to God.’¹

Again another week, and the tumult of joy that swept across the whole North was suddenly hushed. Lincoln had not been many days back in Washington when he was shot dead by the assassin.

Europe shuddered—all nations felt the shock and mourned ; but in the calm of history this dire tragedy appears as an incident only in one of the mightiest revolutions. Four millions of emancipated slaves welcomed the return of peace, and a new era began. The questions of pacification and reconstruction were beyond immediate solution. It was a courageous but perilous resolution, into which many motives entered,

¹ Leland’s *Life of Lincoln*.

which two years later gave the negroes full political privilege, and made the enfranchised slaves full citizens of the United States.

The terms of emancipation left slavery still existent in a few of the loyal States, but the general feeling at the close of the war made its extinction easy. Particular schemes might have their difficulties, but these were all finally overborne by the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution, which, after some delays, was carried in January, 1865, and was proclaimed as ratified by the several States within that year, that—*Neither slavery, nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States or any place subject to their jurisdiction.*

CHAPTER XLIV

THE NEGRO AS CITIZEN

AS Livingstone said of his African work, 'The end of the geographical feat is only the beginning of the enterprise,' so the overthrow of slavery can never be more than prelude ; it is the first, not the final achievement in a new progression. There are conditions of slavery that seem better than freedom ; there are conditions of freedom that seem worse than slavery. The endless problems that press upon the path of liberty cry out for an infinite wisdom to solve them. The discontents of Jamaica grew into the rebellion which disturbed the first years of Queen Victoria's reign ; the grievous troubles of later years in that island, which began in a difference between the governor and the assembly, arose from the same kind of panic that provoked insurrection in earlier times. The immensity of the task that confronted the United States when they summoned the emancipated negroes to citizenship was seen from the first.

Freedom is not equality : it does not constitute fraternity, it does not endow with ideas that have divine right to rule, it gives only an educative impulse,

it is soil for all growths. A strange spectacle was witnessed when the negroes came to power in South Carolina, the oldest of the slave-holding States. Time was when an able-bodied negro there was worth from £200 to £250; he was not overworked, and he lived in rough plenty. The State Constitution, under which South Carolina was readmitted to the Union, established universal suffrage without regard to previous condition, race, or colour; so that, after 1868, every coloured man who was of age was a voter. Age and residence were the only qualifications for the suffrage. When the Federal troops were withdrawn, the negro 'boss' became a personage of importance. White men who were called 'carpet baggers' came from the North southward, and made themselves leaders in the midst of the 400,000 liberated slaves, the most of whom were densely ignorant; but both in the Senate and in the Lower House of the State Legislature, the negro members were in overwhelming majority.

Their lavish expenditure brought Carolina to bankruptcy. In the days of the white aristocracy, an average of £95,000 a year sufficed for all the expenses of government; under the new régime they rose to an average of £364,000 a year. No doubt the re-organisation that follows war made heavy demands, but there were gross corruption and lavish folly. The legislative chambers were gorgeously furnished; luxurious banquets were given. 'For one session alone £25,000 were expended on wines, liquors, imported fruits and cigars. Gold pens, which cost the State £2 each, were served out to all the members of the State

Legislature, many of whom could not write. Each member was also furnished with a *Webster's Unabridged Dictionary*, for which the State paid £5. When the session of the Legislature came to an end, the luxurious furnishings of the State Houses all disappeared with the dispersal of the politicians, and at the beginning of each new session the House was refurnished. Almost every negro politician had his price. Bribes ranged in amount from £1 to £200. A ring existed for plundering the State under the guise of expenditure on printing, and nearly £12,000 a month were absorbed by it.¹

For eight years this rule endured; then came a reaction which broke it. One device of the educated class was the introduction of ballot boxes—a separate one for each official to be chosen at the elections, which confused the illiterate voters, to whom the law forbade help in casting their votes. Another check was found in a new system of registration. A few years later this was supplemented by the institution of an educational test for the franchise.

When one Southern State after another adopted this limitation, the negro vote was reduced to such proportions as endangered the balance it was originally intended to establish between the races. The failure of the Carolina experiment was sure from the first; there needs an education for freedom. The solution now suggested is an educational test for both races alike; but even that has its inequalities and risks.

‘The wisest among my race,’ said Booker Washington,

¹ *Before and after Emancipation*, by E. Porritt.

himself a negro, at the Atlanta Exposition in 1895, 'understand that the agitation of questions of social equality is the extremest folly, and that progress in the enjoyment of all the privileges that come to us must be the result of severe and constant struggle, rather than of artificial forcing. No race that has anything to contribute to the markets of the world is long in any degree ostracised. It is important and right that all privileges of the law be ours, but it is vastly more important that we be prepared for the exercise of these privileges.'

There were noble Americans who gave themselves to the education of the people whom they had helped to free; and none is worthier of remembrance than General Armstrong, who was founder and soul of the Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute, for the training of coloured people. Booker Washington, who may be accounted the negro statesman of America, was one of his lads, whom he trained and passed on to work at Tuskegee. The more hopeful aspects show in the recollections of Washington's *Autobiography*.

'The experience of a whole race beginning to go to school for the first time presents,' he says, 'one of the most interesting studies that has ever occurred in connection with the development of any race. Few people, who were not right in the midst of the scenes, can form any exact idea of the intense desire which the people of my race showed for an education. As I have stated, it was a whole race trying to go to school. Few were too young, and none were too old, to make the attempt to learn. As fast as any kind of

teachers could be secured, not only were day schools filled but night schools as well. The great ambition of the older people was to try to learn to read the Bible before they died. With this end in view, men and women who were fifty or seventy-five years old would often be found in the night-school. Sunday-schools were formed soon after freedom, but the principal book studied in the Sunday-school was the spelling-book. Day-school, night-school and Sunday-school were always crowded, and often many had to be turned away for want of room.'

Of the period of reconstruction, Booker Washington has many recollections. The Ku Klux Klan began by terrorising the negroes. Its 'patrollers' were bands of white men—usually young men, who broke up the meetings of the freedmen, prevented their passing from plantation to plantation, and so took away their opportunities of political combination. He strongly condemns the policy which gave the untrained blacks power in order to hold the whites in check. He vehemently protests against the delusion that book education is the regeneration of a people. The desire for education, as it grew with freedom, and laid hold of the blacks, took sometimes very grotesque forms; they thought little of industrial progress. In the creed of some of them, Adam did not delve nor Eve spin; fanatics taught that work was accursed. Not a few aspired to be teachers who themselves knew nothing. One negro announced that he was prepared to teach that the earth was either flat or round as the majority of his patrons might prefer. In the earlier days of

freedom 'almost every coloured man who learned to read would receive "a call to preach" within a few days after he began reading.' The call usually came in church; the one called would fall, and lie speechless and motionless for hours. Sometimes this kind of call was thrice repeated. But Booker Washington tells the story of a coloured man in Alabama, who one hot day in July while he was at work in a certain field, suddenly stopped, and looking towards the skies, said: 'O Lawd, de cotton am so grassy, de work am so hard, and de sun am so hot, that I b'lieve dis darky am called to preach!' From first to last, he resolutely strove against these tendencies. A much more practical mood now rules. The industrial training of the masses, and the intellectual leadership of men of their own race, are both requisites for the future.

The experience of Georgia has been of a wholesomer kind. There the freedmen numbered nearly half a million. When their masters despaired after the war, some sold their land cheaply, others gave it away to favourite old slaves. Under the enthusiasm of the first ten years of liberty the negroes set to work and began to accumulate. Then they suffered from changing markets, and then again good fortune returned to them. The average size of the negro land-holdings is now sixty-three acres. In a beautiful new business block in Atlanta is a great marble corridor. Within this are two passenger elevators and a freight elevator. On the latter is this sign: 'For Negroes and other large Packages.' 'A people,'

says an accomplished Afro-American writer,¹ 'who in the midst of public insult and private wrong have saved fourteen million in a generation deserve encouragement. *Their* blackness certainly means something—it means Pluck.'

The negro population of the States has doubled since emancipation. Race jealousies are again becoming acute, but never yet was there nation upon earth that solved its social questions in a generation.

The war with Spain, which extended American influence, revived discussion of some of the old questions. Cuba had been for centuries a stronghold of slavery; there the slave trade had persevered and flourished in spite of many attempts to suppress it. Its evil traditions were swept away when the island passed under control of the United States. The work of regeneration was nobly begun: Christendom would rejoice in its completion. In the debate on the Philippine Government Bill an amendment was moved which would have prohibited slavery in the Philippines or any other territory over which the United States should obtain jurisdiction. It was set aside on the ground that slavery would be abolished, but could not be suddenly abolished by statute. There were 250,000 slaves remaining under this decision.

¹ *The Savings of Black Georgia*, by W. E. Burghardt du Bois (*The Outlook*).

CHAPTER XLV

THE SERFS OF RUSSIA

WHILE these events were ripening in the Western World, a change was passing over northern Europe which had a common origin in the newly-diffused spirit of freedom. The influences which broke up the mediæval system in France and Germany did not penetrate far into Russia. The economic conditions by which she was controlled were the product of her own steppes, and were modified by invasions from the East till the strong will of Peter the Great arose to give another impress, and make a new Power. Serfdom ruled, but the serfs were a people of whom the world heard little. Russia was so vast, so remote, so maligned by prejudices, so clouded by suspicions, that it needed the genius of a Turguenev or a Tolstoi to bring its problems into full light. The emancipation of the serfs was in conception a deed which dwarfs all of which we have been writing; but it has no voluminous histories, no crowd of biographies, no 'Fourth of July' orations to commemorate it. It was a transaction that for years hardly advanced in the general knowledge beyond the dignity of 'news.'

The life of Alexander II., who achieved it, is full of the tragedy which seems to hang about the greatest ; a fine nature, coming to absolute power at a time of national humiliation—emerging into the midst of an almost revolutionary aspiration for change, yet thwarted in high purposes by nobles and people, harassed by revolt in Poland, pursued by conspiracies—sharing the lot of his soldiers in a hotly-fought war, victorious without the spoils—confronted by the sudden upspringing of Nihilism. Thrice is he fired at ; poison is mixed for him ; he is tracked by dynamite plots ; a hidden mine explodes beneath the imperial train ; the Winter Palace where the empress lies in life's last lingering weakness, is shattered by an explosion as the family gathers to dinner. At last, in the streets of St. Petersburg, a bomb bursts under his carriage ; he is again unharmed, and hastens to succour the wounded, when a second bomb strikes and rends him. So lived and died the emancipator of the serfs.

The village commune in its first estate, and the earliest provincial rule, as Stepniak has described them, had the simplicity of a primitive democracy, which knew nothing of votes, but governed by the principle of a unanimous consent, supposed to be threshed out in full debates. Slavery was existent, however, long before Peter the Great swept the land with his autocratic reforms, the great object of which was to fuse and educate the nation, though they worsened the position of the serfs. The standing army which he constituted was reinforced by the conscription, and its rank and file were bound to serve with the colours for

twenty-five years. The nobles were required from the age of twenty to serve the State, either as soldiers, sailors, or administrators in a service which knew no relief except by physical disablement; and their sons, under a compulsory system of education to which the West has not yet attained, were flogged by soldiers if they played truant to schools instituted to bring them to efficiency. As compensation to the aristocratic class, they were given a firmer hold on their estates, and the peasants that went with the land were bound to its owner in a stricter servitude. From this time Stepniak dates what he calls 'the true slavery of the Russian nation.' All were held in bondage to the State. From the nobles it required their blood, their time, and their lives. The people, besides giving many of their sons to the army, supported with enforced labour the Czar's servants and their own masters, and sustained with the taxes wrung from their toil the finances of government. Sometimes they were constrained to give the work of their hands—as, for instance, in the construction of the second capital. Multitudes of masons, excavators, carpenters, and other labourers were summoned from every part of the empire, and commanded, 'under pain of confiscation of their goods and death on the scaffold,' to raise on the banks of the Neva the great city which bears the name of its founder. But how many when traversing its spacious streets bestow a thought on the hundred thousand nameless serfs at the cost of whose lives St. Petersburg was built.¹

¹ *Russia under the Tsars.* By S. Stepniak.

Rural Russia of the old time had its free peasants, who held land, and might own it, and were members of the village commune ; it had also a numerous class of wandering labourers of the field, who had the right of changing quarters at fixed periods, if they desired ; and beside these, it had a large body of slaves whose numbers were sometimes recruited from prisoners made in raids upon other territories. These three classes were brought gradually under the same constraints, lost alike their civil privileges, and became subject to the nobles—not as vassals, but in the servitude that ownership compels, and this mainly by the action of laws forbidding migration, necessary in origin but disastrous in result, the serfs as they became more dependent losing all freedom. The poll-tax levied by Peter on all had tended also to bring the free peasant down to the lower level, thus reversing the process of the Byzantine empire, where an equal tax had helped to raise the slave to equality with the freeman. When in 1762 the nobility were released from obligatory service, no relief was given to the serf. Wallace¹ quotes from an ukase of 1767, which commands that ‘if any serf shall dare to present a petition against his master, he shall be punished with the knout and transported for life to the mines.’ And he quotes these words from one as late as 1721: ‘The proprietors sell their peasants and domestic servants not even in

¹ A full and unprejudiced account of serfdom, and the history of emancipation, derived from long and patient inquiry on the spot, will be found in the second volume of *Russia*, by D. Mackenzie Wallace, to which we would acknowledge our indebtedness.

families, but one by one, like cattle, as is done nowhere else in the whole world, from which practice there is not a little wailing.' The right to sell the serf apart from the land came to be officially recognised. Wallace remarks that even down to the year of emancipation 'it was customary to compute a nobleman's fortune by the number of his serfs.'

Peter the great is said to have himself enjoined on the Senate the duty of legislating to prevent the sale of peasants away from the land; and although it was the pressure of his own exertions which wrought for their enslavement, he allowed anyone who had gained money in trading to enrol himself if he chose as inhabitant of a town, without waiting for his master's consent. The condition of the serf varied greatly; the wrongs natural to the system flourished; terrible cruelties were sometimes revealed; the knout was in unchallenged use on many estates; and the judicial sentences which administered punishment frequently enjoined a '*cruel* whipping,' thus making a virtue of severity. On the other hand, there were thousands of estates where a benigner rule made life easy, and serfs lived happily, without care, from year to year. It has been the custom to describe the most oppressive cruelties as exceptions and abuses, as in all slave-lands. As from time to time they caught attention, attempts were made to improve the lot of the serfs, but with small effect. Alexander I. forbade the sale of serfs away from the land, and proposed other ameliorations. In the reign of Nicholas no fewer than six committees were summoned to consider the question.

Alexander II., before he came to the throne, had been placed at his own request on a commission of inquiry into the maltreatment of serfs on a provincial estate. The facts elicited prompted him to draw up a memorial which he presented to his father with a plan for a general emancipation. The Czar Nicholas gave his sympathy, but thought the scheme would provoke revolution. Alexander took the risks, and on the day which ushered in the new era that followed on the Treaty of Paris, announced to the nobles assembled at the Kremlin his intention to deal with the question in due course. One of his first acts was to appoint a commission to advise, but so many obstacles arose that he took advantage of a movement of reform in the Lithuanian provinces to issue an imperial rescript in which he invited them to devise a plan of liberation ; and at the same time he sent round a circular to the nobles of other provinces suggesting co-operation. His policy as soon as enunciated was received with enthusiasm. It harmonised with the cry for a new Russia, which the sense of humiliation had prompted. No other reforms were possible, said the general sense, while serfdom remained, but it proved by no means easy to adjust such ideas to the interested claims of different classes. For example, to liberate the serfs without providing for them would be to create a body dangerous to the State, while to find land for them might mean that proprietors must surrender it. Provincial committees were appointed in every district. The Czar himself presided over the council chosen to elaborate the scheme, and the impress of his mind and

will were felt at every stage. Almost precipitately, on February 19, 1861, the edict at last went forth which made twenty millions of serfs free men ; Mr. Gladstone has given the number as forty million, which includes the peasants of every class who were affected by it. They were no longer liable to be beaten unconvicted ; they were to have the civil rights of the free rural classes, and the authority of the proprietor was to be replaced by communal self-government ; they were to hold their lands and cabins in perpetuity at fixed rents, in either money or labour, for a term of years. Four-fifths of the compensation money paid to the landlords was to be raised by a government loan, and the other fifth by a tax on the villages, as price of the land given to them. This colossal change involved colossal expenditure, which has been estimated at a hundred millions. ‘Arbiters of peace’ were appointed in every province to settle disputed questions.

So vast a revolution was inevitably of the nature of experiment. Multitudes profited by it ; multitudes suffered. Large tracts of waste land were brought under cultivation. An uplifting impulse was given to all classes. Of the serfs, we are told, millions became unfettered proprietors, and some wealthy men. ‘Some of the richest shopkeepers and merchants in St. Petersburg and Moscow,’ says Alexander’s biographer, from whose summary of results we quote,¹ ‘were serfs who paid large incomes to their masters for permission to trade, yet could not purchase their freedom ; and if they failed to pay the sum demanded, might any day

¹ *Life of Alexander II.*, by G. Joyneville.

be turned into agricultural labourers. In 1861 they were freed at once, and the household serfs after two years' probation. But a good master or a good landlord, in many cases, at once came to an understanding with his freed serfs to serve him for fair wages; and their relations towards each other remained little altered.

No observer has yet arisen seeing far enough or deep enough over the troubled Russian horizon to be able to adjudicate the exact balance of gains in this immense reform. The years have not achieved all that was expected. Irregularities of soil have created difficulties; in some places there has been a scarcity of labour, in others an overcrowding of population. There have been outbreaks of angry suspicion. Essentials to progress have been wanting. Grievous famines, moreover, have intervened.

Beyond the Caucasus, Vambéry has described the slave trade in Bokhara—the unhappy captives carried off by robbers, the Turcoman tents of the better class with each a couple of slaves in clanking chains. These things have been changed also by the influence of Russia, who has forbidden the slave trade in her own Asiatic possessions, as well as in the countries under her protection.

CHAPTER XLVI

DAVID LIVINGSTONE

IN Westminster Abbey Wilberforce lies near to Pitt and Fox, and the statue of Buxton stands close by. Not far off is the grave of David Livingstone, on which the last words he wrote are engraven :—

ALL I CAN SAY IN MY SOLITUDE IS, MAY HEAVEN'S RICH
BLESSING COME DOWN ON EVERY ONE, AMERICAN,
ENGLISH, TURK, WHO WILL HELP TO HEAL THIS OPEN
SORE OF THE WORLD.

The record of his life this country holds as one of its noblest possessions. His discoveries turned the sandy deserts of imagination into forests and rivers, and filled the untrodden wilderness of ignorance with swarming tribes. At every stage of his explorations he was filled with horror at the revelations of the slave trade, its extent and unspeakable cruelties ; he saw a continent devastated ; his spirit yearned to stay the plague. Think of this lone man advising the people to unite against the slave trader ; preaching to them of 'Our Father,' and the wickedness of stealing any of His children. If angels listen to men, surely they would rank such words in such a wild before a House of

Commons speech. In later times the rumour spread among the tribes that he made no slaves, and he was called 'the good one.' But think of him again in the midst of a massacre. In his *Last Journals* he describes how he was sauntering on the banks of the Lualaba ; there were 1500 people, chiefly women, peacefully engaged in marketing, when shot after shot fell among them, and the village was fired. It was the attack of a hostile chief ; and in the sudden *mêlée* the loss of life was between 330 and 400 souls. 'Oh, let Thy kingdom come !' writes Livingstone. 'No one will ever know the exact loss on this bright, sultry summer morning. It gave me the impression of being in Hell.' What Buxton in his quiet home had planned for the Niger, Livingstone in the midst of the actual evils desired to see carried out. He longed to bring these regions within the influence of Christianity and civilisation, and to see the pathway opened for legitimate commerce. In letter after letter he urged the duty of action ; and on every return to England used every opportunity to enforce it. There were wonderful changes to spring from these beginnings.

The Portugese slave traders kindled Livingstone's wrath. It was from a Portugese slave-ship, captured at sea, in 1658, that the first negroes were landed at the Cape of Good Hope ; a number were afterwards brought from the coast of Guinea ; and slavery was too soon naturalised, a medley of nationalities from Asia and elsewhere being swept into its contingents. It had subsisted a hundred and seventy years when the

Abolition Act broke in upon it under British rule. The share of compensation money did not satisfy the Dutch, and they trekked northward. It was not this fringe of the slave trade which affected Central Africa ; but while attention had been concentrated on the Atlantic trade, it began now to be known that Eastern Africa had its own demand.

Shiploads of Malagasy slaves supplied the islands of Mauritius and Bourbon, and were distributed to the most convenient markets. They could be purchased on the coast of Madagascar at from six to twelve pounds, and a man sold at from thirty to sixty, a woman at from forty to eighty pounds.

Long after the suppression of this trade, slavery lingered in Madagascar. There was a slow awakening of the Christian conscience. In 1871, at a large meeting of delegates from the missionary churches, slave-dealers were declared to be ineligible for membership. A law forbade, under severe penalties, any form of general merchandise in slaves, though owners were still allowed to sell their own. When the French came into possession, and M. Laroche became, in 1896, the first Resident-General, he issued an edict of emancipation, which was received by the slave-owners with sullen calm—for there was no compensation—and by the slaves with rejoicing.¹ He told them, in effect, that they were now French, and therefore free. There were princes who, within twenty-fours after the edict, had to get their own fuel and their own water, to cook their own rice, and do everything for themselves. The slaves

¹ *Madagascar*, by T. T. Matthews.

did the best they could for themselves. Many went home to the places where they were originally captured in the inter-tribal wars of the past. Some made arrangements for staying with their previous owners, in cases where there was affection between them, and where they had been well treated.

Widow

22 9. 80.

Widow using my name
(which the British public has
heard too much of lately)
try a push for the abolition

to be made to publish in all
the public places on the
Convention of Augt-1857 and
the Dues of Ex Khedive of
slavery. This is my important
I want to do it in London.

Yours sincerely

Alfred

P.S. I am not forgetting those
trade which is life in Red
Sea.

CHAPTER XLVII

GENERAL GORDON—ROMOLO GESSI—CARDINAL
LAVIGERIE

ALL the atrocities of the Atlantic slave trade, all the cruelties of the Western plantations put together, scarcely equal in horror the revelations of the first few years which followed the exploration of Africa. From Mungo Park to Stanley, all the greater travellers who crossed the slave belt had one tale to tell, and volumes might be filled with their narratives, which show man on the level of the beasts of prey. The uttermost of human wretchedness appeared. These terrible things were not solely the natural fruit of a savagery outside civilisation, though that were appalling, but in large degree the product of the crimes and greed of unthinking men living within its pale. They were for a long time stimulated by the action of white men belonging to the foremost nations, whose commerce profited by the labour of slaves ; or they ministered to the lusts and luxury of pampered orientals, who basked in palaces ; and they made hundreds of thousands the drudges, many in populous cities, of races accounted superior.

These revelations were, however, but the first chapter in another of the world's forward movements, which will some day have its own history. It was not long before the new continent was partitioned in 'spheres of influence.' The discovery of gold and diamonds was to transform the south. All these things came upon the Christian churches as a divine call to 'go up and possess the land.' The missionaries who went forth were men of high capacity, richly endowed with the best gifts of life, and 'full of faith and of the Holy Ghost.' The enterprises they led had each a character of its own, and were consecrated by a spirit of devotion and sacrifice which are memorable. They were, moreover, on a scale which made them a powerful aid against ascendent evils.

The year that saw Livingstone's burial in Westminster Abbey, saw also General Gordon's departure for Egypt. It can never be forgotten how Livingstone was found by his men at Ilala, dead on his knees, nor how they embalmed the body and brought it in a nine months' march to the coast. Gordon was a man of like aspirations. In one of his last journeys, he wrote on camel-back to Horace Waller:—'The solitary grandeur of the desert makes one feel how vain is the effort of man'; but he had through all vicissitudes and in his last hour unshaken faith in the governing will of God. More than a thousand miles south of Cairo lay the equatorial region which Gordon, as successor of Sir Samuel Baker, was set to rule. He passed down the Nile in hope of opening a way to the lakes, and so bringing the barren deserts of the north within reach

of the fruitful south, establishing posts as he went along.

Romolo Gessi of Ravenna was one of his lieutenants. In him the spirit and dreams of young Italy lived ; first a merchant and afterwards engaged in the mercantile marine, he threw himself with ardour into the work of African exploration, impelled mainly by a desire to aid in the suppression of the slave trade. When Gordon reached the Albert Nyanza he left it to Gessi to circumnavigate the lake, which he found to be smaller than had been anticipated, though 140 miles from north to south.

When Gordon turned northward home, at the end of 1876, it was with the feeling that the existing state of things in Egypt and the Soudan could not continue. 'Why should I fear? Is man more strong than God?' In a few weeks he was back again, with full powers as Governor-General of the whole Soudan. The Egyptians had been repulsed in an attack on Abyssinia ; and insurrection was spreading among the tribes to the south. With wonderful celerity Gordon sped to one of the chief points of danger, through waterless wastes, where scattered wells were the only means of keeping alive. Darfur was the headquarters of the slave kings ; there he put on the golden armour given to him by the Khedive and rode into the camp, astounding them by inviting them to come to his divan ; and when they came, insisting that they must disarm and go home. So his influence spreads from point to point ; yet no sooner does he turn his back than the ancient evils face round also and rage again behind him. 'When you

have got the ink that has soaked into blotting-paper out of it, then slavery will cease in these lands.' So he wrote. Here it was, while pressing down upon a famous slave den, where murderers, robbers, and all villains gathered for raiding, that he wrote :—' I do not believe in you all. . . . The Christianity of the mass is a vapid, tasteless thing and of no use to anybody. The people of England care more for their dinners than they do for anything else, and you may depend on it, it is only an active few whom God presses on to take an interest in the slave question. It is very shocking ! Will you take some more salmon ? ' ¹

The tribes in the Bahr-el-Ghazal, that tangled region of streams in the Upper Nile, had revolted, and the Italian Gessi was despatched to subdue them. Zebehr, a born ruler, but also one who had spread the desolations of the slave trade, and was calculated to have carried away 50,000 slaves annually, had been arrested in Cairo, and his son Suleiman rose in rebellion. Gessi, with a comparatively small force, repulsed an attack of 20,000 men, though his troops were so short of ammunition that they had to pick up and recast the bullets of their enemy. Afterwards he captured Suleiman himself. For this service Gordon made him a Pasha, and he became Governor of the Bahr-el-Ghazal. It is told of him that he turned the country into a garden, and so won the confidence of the people that the rich products of the country round took the place of the slave trade. ' A just government '—it was his own comment—' did

¹ Sir William Butler's *Charles Gordon*, a book which every Englishman should read.

what seven and twenty thousand muskets could not do : it increased the revenue tenfold.'

On the way back to Khartoum his ship became entangled in the vegetation of the river—the sudd, 'a mass of enwoven plants, a tangled skein, sometimes 12,000 feet in length.' For three months Gessi and his companions struggled with it ; hatchets and spades were unavailing, the vessel made no progress ; famine came with slow death and all its terrors. At last help reached them ; Gessi, like a skeleton, was lifted to another vessel, but a fever ensued which ended his life at Suez.¹

When the days of tragedy approached which were to close Gordon's own heroic history, it was one of the confusing incidents that as he had sanctioned slaveholding as the only practicable policy in the Soudan, a practice distinct from slave hunting, so he asked—a proposal hotly debated—that Zebehr should be appointed to succeed him at Khartoum, in the belief that the exigencies of the position would hold his powerful will to reasonable courses.

On the other side of the Soudan, on the French borderland, Cardinal Lavigerie led in the struggle against slavery. He came to Europe to endeavour to arouse a crusade against it, and stimulate a movement which should interrupt the influx of domestic slavery into Turkey and Asia. As Archbishop of Algiers and Carthage, he had sent out a body of young men who came to be popularly known as the 'White Fathers of Algeria' ; they were pledged to live the life

¹ *Italian Explorers*, by S. Bompiani.

of the natives, and to suffer for them, even unto death ; and of three hundred of them, one hundred did die, eleven as martyrs, and others from the effects of the climate and privation. The religious feuds which at one time caused so much trouble in Uganda sprang from the fanaticism some of them stimulated. Cardinal Lavigerie has described how they penetrated to the central plateaux, and witnessed the devastation of the villages and the increase of the slave trade under Arab intruders. In the first place the slaves had been seized to carry the ivory down to the coast, but they had become themselves the more valuable article of commerce, and were taken to markets which supplied the oases of the Sahara, the frontiers of Algeria, of Tunis, of Tripoli, and even as far as Egypt.

When Gordon was at Darfur he found twenty-five thousand black soldiers in the government service, all either captured or bought slaves, without pay, and half-naked ; but no one has ever been able to number the scattered hosts of slaves borne northward. It was after his first expedition that a convention between the Egyptian and British Governments forbade the importation of slaves into Egypt ; Gordon found these diplomatic determinations of no avail. A more practical step was taken in 1888, when a circular was addressed to the governors and mudirs forbidding, under severe penalties, the sale of slaves from family to family, and enjoining upon them to render every facility for the manumission of slaves. Ten years later it was found that the practice of bringing slaves into market had not been wholly extinguished. But wherever the

influence of the European Powers has been directly felt, the conditions have radically changed, as was the case in India when in 1843 slavery lost its legal status. In 1885 there were thirty-one slave-dealers in Egypt—now there is not one. In Egypt, Lord Cromer, including even the Soudan in his view, was, at the close of the nineteenth century, able to say ‘that, for the first time in the history of anti-slavery operations, there seems to be some real prospect of final and complete success.’

CHAPTER XLVIII

ACROSS AFRICA TO THE CONGO

THE Zanzibar slave depot had long been a point to which the Arab traders pressed in their dhows, pouring forth their victims gathered on the opposite mainland. It was described ninety years ago by an English captain, with its daily procession of captives set off to the best advantage to tempt buyers. The presence of a squadron did little to check the trade. Then, in 1872, the English Government, not unmindful of his achievements in Scinde, despatched Sir Bartle Frere to negotiate a treaty for its suppression. He found that from twenty thousand to thirty thousand slaves were being shipped every year; but failed to secure the object of his embassy. His departure was followed by the arrival of six English men-of-war, with two French and one American; and in their presence Sir John Kirk, the political agent, was able to overcome opposition, and the treaty was signed. In six months the slave-market was at an end; a part of the ground which it occupied was bought by Bishop Steere for the Universities Mission, and it came about that the communion table within the cathedral that rose stood on the very spot

of the old whipping-post. But the traces of slavery were not so easily extinguished. It took years of patient watchfulness and persistent pressure from point to point to eradicate ancient custom, and even yet the work awaits completion.

The Universities Mission was one of the products of Livingstone's work. It has been splendidly served by men who took no payment. Steere, who was one of its first leaders, had much of Livingstone's spirit. In walking to Nyassaland he met nine caravans, 'representing from 1500 to 2000 slaves, and possibly some 10,000 for the whole year.' Another of his journeys took him to Masasi, where he founded a settlement for freed slaves; 'he showed the natives how to build; with his own hand he laid out the gardens, measured the roads, planted the first trees, planned out the houses, varying his labours with incessant interviews with chiefs, visitings, parleyings, instructions, making friends everywhere, and imbuing all around with the same spirit and energy which he was himself throwing into the work.'

Other freed slaves were planted at Newala, about fifty miles off. More than once the missionaries were instrumental in making peace between warring tribes. One pleasant incident is related of two bodies with their spears, sixty of one tribe and one hundred of another, meeting one Sunday evening, shaking hands English fashion, and promising not to catch each other for slaves.

We get glimpses of the activity of the slave dhows only ten years since in the journals of Bishop Smythies,

who succeeded Steere : for instance, one appears flying the French flag—a sailor kicks open a hatch, little arms are thrust out, search is made and seventy-seven slaves are found—‘some under two decks, without light or air.’

The Church Missionary Society had wise and vigorous counsellors who knew the miseries and villainies of the slave trade of East Africa as well as Wilberforce did those of the Atlantic seaboard, and who were as eager to check them as he was to stop the Western. They were anxious to secure some bit of territory which, being British, would be a place of safety for the slaves rescued by the cruisers, whose lot was sometimes pitiable. This was obtained near Mombasa, and an industrial settlement was formed there and named Frere Town, in which hundreds of slaves found a refuge. But there went forth a renewing influence in the midst of the down-trodden tribes in the labours of Mackay and others, which brought a larger enfranchisement.

The countrymen of Livingstone were the first to institute special missions in the regions he had explored. The Free Church sent a steamer up the Zambesi and the Shiré, which was carried past the cataracts and launched on Lake Nyassa, on the borders of which a station was founded, now known as Livingstonia, where not only have native churches been founded, but the people instructed in various trades, such as engineering, carpentering, printing, house-building, quarrying, agriculture, and telegraphy. The Established Church of Scotland chose a place in the

Shiré Highlands, named Blantyre, from the parish where the explorer was born. Then the London Missionary Society settled on Lake Tanganyika; other missions followed; they were beginnings, to be followed by times of peril and difficulty. But they were in the heart of the slave-trading regions, and brought them deliverance. It would require a separate history to trace their story.

Other influences pressed in behind. With the British Protectorate came High Commissioners, and with the traders railways, long regarded as one of the most serviceable allies in checking slavery. In North Nyasaland a slave-trading stronghold was attacked and more than eleven hundred slaves liberated. After a struggle of some months we find, at the beginning of 1896, Sir Harry Johnston writing to Lord Salisbury: 'There does not exist a single independent avowed slave-dealing chief within the British Central African Protectorate.' Mackay in Uganda saw many an act of ferocious cruelty; he told of two thousand innocent victims butchered by the king's order in a single day. Lugard at a later date described the universal custom of domestic slavery. But contrast with this past the following passage from the last report of Sir Charles Eliot, His Majesty's Commissioner in East Africa:—

'Before closing, I must refer to the enormous difference between the kingdom of Uganda and East Africa. To cross the lake is like visiting another continent. The country is cultivated and thickly populated. There are good roads, fences, and houses—all constructed by the natives. The people are all

clothed, and it is a reproach not to be able to read and write. The majority of the people are at least nominal Christians. Except in Japan, there probably has never been such an instance of a non-European race wishing to adopt European civilisation. It is highly probable that this predisposition to civilisation is due to an admixture of North African blood; but any estimate of the potentialities of East Africa must reckon with it, and recognise in the natives of Uganda a semi-civilised race, far superior to the best of the Somalis and Masai.'

The slave trade on the West Coast was not wholly extinguished till 1861, when Lord Palmerston took possession of Lagos, which had become its main point of support.¹ There, as late as 1848, the Portuguese traders would only take slaves for goods. In 1897 the legal status of slavery was abolished throughout the Niger territories. It was at Lagos that Samuel Crowther made his home—the one man whose life seemed best to represent the hopes and possibilities of the new times that were dawning. As a boy he had been seized and put on board a slave-ship sailing for Cuba or Brazil, when an English cruiser came to the rescue. It has been often told how, after twenty-five years, he chanced to meet his mother, from whom he had been torn; she had been in slavery the greater part of that time, and had been redeemed by her

¹ As late as 1860 Gladstone quotes Palmerston as saying that he had two great objects always before him in life: one to put England in a state of defence, the other the suppression of the slave trade.

daughters ; she would have offered a sacrifice to her gods on recovering him, but he assured her that it was the Christians' God to whom she owed her son. The lad had thriven when put to school by his rescuers, grew to great usefulness, and lived to be long the bishop of that region.

The visit of Cardinal Lavigerie to London had one important result in the Brussels Conference of 1889-90, to which, at the suggestion of England, the King of the Belgians had invited the European Powers. It marks an epoch in the history. The representatives of seventeen Powers signed the Act then framed. The gradual growth of civilised opinion had been signalised by many incidents. The Dutch had given freedom to their colonies in 1862 ; Portugal, whose subjects had done so much to keep alive the slave trade, put an end to slavery within its own domains in 1878 by a gradual process. Spain, which had had its spasms of philanthropy, did not tear up its miserable record for another ten years. The Powers in concert had for years maintained small squadrons on both the west and east coasts of Africa to little effect. At Brussels, for the first time, the whole area was surveyed, and remedial measures fully planned for the suppression of the trade in the interior.¹

With the exploration of the Congo there had opened

¹ The Aborigines Protection Society has, from time to time, presented an array of facts sufficient to check any over-sanguine estimate, which shows how necessary still is incessant vigilance.

yet a further vision of progress. Stanley's enterprising spirit had led him across Africa to the upper waters of the great river, and for more than a thousand miles he floated down it. There are no more terrible pictures of the slave trade than those he has given of the Arab hunters in these parts. One camp he describes where youths were bound to each other, in twenties, by chains round the neck. 'The slave-traders admit they have only 2300 captives in this fold, yet they have raided through the length and breadth of a country larger than Ireland, bearing fire and spreading carnage with lead and iron.' Some few years later, commissioned by the King of the Belgians, Stanley returned, and established trading stations at many points. Then, in 1885, a great step was taken, which seemed to promise immense benefits, in the founding of the Congo Free State. All the Powers in conference at Berlin gave it sanction. The sixth article of the agreement pledged them to 'watch over the preservation of the native populations and the improvement of their moral and material conditions of existence, and to work together for the suppression of slavery, and especially of the slave trade ; to protect and encourage, without distinction of creed or nation, all religious, scientific, or charitable institutions established and organised for these objects, or intended to educate the natives, and bring home to them the advantages of civilisation.' It was agreed there should be no monopolies ; trade was to be free within the Congo basin.

Here, as a thousand times elsewhere, the beginning proved not to be the end. While benevolent Europe

was slumbering in satisfaction, there were large companies scheming to exploit the land. A huge territory, which is described as 'the great rubber-exporting district of the world,' was absorbed in nine concessions. The rubber is mainly collected in small quantities from the natives ; their labour is forced ; and they are terrorised by sentries from the wildest tribes. Almost incredible accounts have been given of the cruelties practised. The British Consul, after a tour of inspection, declares that the population of one district has decreased in seventeen years by about 87 per cent, and that of another in ten years, 60 or 70 per cent. The old spirit of devilish greed has reappeared in a new form. It would seem as if a great charter of hope had been torn up in a way the civilised Powers who signed the Congo Treaty cannot permit.

As we close this retrospect of a long struggle, the world is perilously near to repeating the mistakes of centuries past. Yet, as we measure the successive steps of progress, and the changes wrought in the face of evils that seemed overwhelming, we would blot the word *despair* out of history.

APPENDIX I

THE following, taken from *Substance of the Debates on a Resolution for Abolishing the Slave Trade* (London, 1806), furnishes an example of the evidence already at the disposal of the Parliament. We print it as it appears in the original :—

In some papers presented to the House of Commons on the 25th of February 1805, is contained a letter from Lord SEAFORTH, the Governor of Barbadoes, in which he thus writes to Earl CAMDEN :—

“I enclose four papers containing, from different quarters, reports on the horrid murders I mentioned in some former letters. *They are selected from a great number*, among which there is not one in contradiction of the horrible facts, though several of the letters are very concise and defective. The truth is, that nothing has given me more trouble than to get at the bottom of these businesses, *so horribly absurd are the prejudices of the people*” (not of one or two, or of a few individuals, but of the PEOPLE).

“I enclose the Attorney General’s letter to me on the subject of the negroes *so most wantonly murdered*.

I am sorry to say SEVERAL OTHER INSTANCES OF THE SAME BARBARITY have occurred, with which I have not troubled your Lordship, as I *only wished to make you acquainted with the subject in general.*"

The letters to which Lord SEAFORTH refers, and which accompany the above extracts, are from four of the most respectable individuals in the island of Barbadoes, viz. Mr. INCE, *the President of the Council*; Mr. COULTHURST, *the Advocate General*; Mr. BECCLES, *the Attorney General*; and the Rev. Mr. PILGRIM. These gentlemen all agree in the material facts of the cases which they state. It would, therefore, be an unnecessary repetition to transcribe the whole of their letters: it will be sufficient to give the substance of the statements which they contain.

I. On the 10th of April 1804, a militia-man of the name of HALLS, of the St. Michael's regiment, returning from military duty, overtook on the road some negroes who were going quietly home from their labour. When he came near he called out that he would kill them, and immediately began to run after them. The negroes not supposing that he really intended to do them any injury, and imagining that he was in joke, did not endeavour to escape, but merely made way for him. The person nearest to him happened to be a woman, the property of a Mr. CLARKE, the owner of SIMMON'S estate, who is stated to have been a valuable Slave, the mother of five or six children, and far advanced in pregnancy. *Without the smallest provocation of any kind, HALLS coolly and deliberately plunged his bayonet several times into her body, when the poor creature dropped*

and expired without a groan. Two gentlemen were eye-witnesses of this horrid action. One of them, Mr. HARDING, the manager of the Codrington College estate, went up to HALLS and spoke harshly to him, and said he ought to be hanged, for he never saw a more unprovoked murder, and that he would certainly carry him before a magistrate. HALLS'S reply is very remarkable. "*For what ?*" said he (with the utmost indifference as to the crime) "*for what ? FOR KILLING A NEGRO!!!*" This is a short but a significant sentence, strongly confirming an important truth which has frequently been asserted, viz. that the negroes are regarded by their white-skinned oppressors as an inferior order of beings, and, under the influence of this sentiment, are naturally enough denied the common rights of humanity, and excluded from the pale of that sympathy, which a sense of a common nature and a common extraction is calculated to inspire. Mr. HARDING, however, greatly to his credit, was proof against the force of HALLS'S compendious reasoning, and having procured assistance laid hold of him, and carried him before Mr. Justice WALTON. Mr. Justice WALTON, it would appear, was not indisposed to use the authority with which he was vested in bringing HALLS to justice, but he found, that "*in his situation as a magistrate, the law of the Island gave him no jurisdiction or authority over him,*" and, in short, that he had no right to commit him. In this dilemma, Mr. WALTON applied to Mr. President INCE. "I told Mr. WALTON," says the President in his letter to Lord SEAFORTH, "that I regretted with real concern, the

deficiency in our law; but that there was a penalty due to the king in such cases" (viz. the ELEVEN POUNDS FOUR SHILLINGS) "and that, as Mr. HARDING had sufficiently substantiated the fact, I would order him to be committed till he paid the forfeiture, or a suit should be commenced against him." Accordingly he was sent to prison.

2. The second instance produced by Lord SEAFORTH is not inferior in atrocity to the first. A Mr. COLBECK, who lives overseer on Cabbagetree Plantation, in St. Lucy's parish, "*had bought a new Negro Boy out of the yard*" (meaning the slave-yard where negroes are exposed to sale, in the same manner as the cattle and sheep in Smithfield market), and carried him home. Conceiving a liking to the boy, he took him into the house and made him wait at table. Mr. CRONE, the overseer of ROWE'S estate, which is near to Cabbagetree Plantation, was in the habit of visiting Mr. COLBECK, *had noticed the boy, and knew him well*. A fire happening one night in the neighbourhood, COLBECK went to give his assistance, and the boy followed him. COLBECK, on his return home, missed the boy, who had lost his way, and as he did not make his appearance the next day, he sent round to his neighbours, and *particularly to CRONE*, informing them that his African lad had strayed, that *he could not speak a word of English*, and possibly he might be found breaking some sugar canes, or taking something else for his support: in which case he requested they would not injure him, but send him home, and he would pay any damage the boy might have committed. After a

lapse of two or three days the poor creature was discovered in a gully (or deep water-course) near to ROWE'S estate ; and a number of negroes were soon assembled about the place. The boy naturally terrified with the threats, the noise and the appearance of so many people, retreated into a hole in a rock, having a stone in his hand, for the purpose, probably, of defence. By this time CRONE and some other white persons had come up. *By their orders a fire was put to the hole where the boy lay, who, when he began to be scorched, ran from his hiding-place into a pool of water which was near.* Some of the negroes pursued him into the pool ; and the boy, it is said, threw the stone which he held in his hand at one of them. On this, two of the white men, CRONE and HOLLINGSWORTH, *fired at the boy several times with shot, and the negroes pelted him with stones.* He was at length dragged out of the pool in a dying condition ; for he had not only received several bruises from the stones, but his breast was so pierced with the shot that it was like a cullender. The white savages (this is the language of Mr. Attorney General BECCLES) ordered the negroes to dig a grave. *Whilst they were digging it the poor creature made signs of begging for water, which was not given to him ; but as fast as the grave was dug, he was thrown into it and covered over* and, as is believed, WHILE YET ALIVE. COLBECK, the owner of the boy, hearing that a negro had been killed, went to CRONE to inquire into the truth of the report. CRONE told him that a negro had been killed and buried, but assured him it was not his, for he knew him well, and he need not be at the trouble of opening the grave.

On this COLBECK *went away* SATISFIED. Receiving, however, further information, he returned and had the grave opened, when he found the murdered negro to be his own. COLBECK brought his action of damages in the courts of the island against CRONE and HOLLINGSWORTH. The cause was ready to be tried, and the court had met for the purpose, when they thought proper to pay double the value of the boy, and £25 for the use of the island (being £5 less than the penalty fixed by law, of £15 currency each), rather than suffer the business to go to a hearing. "This, I am truly sorry to say," observes the Advocate General, "*was the only punishment which could be inflicted for so barbarous and atrocious a crime.*"

This horrid recital (which is given almost in the words of the report, merely avoiding repetitions) seems to require little comment. One circumstance of it, however, may not strike the minds of some readers with its due force, although it appears to be the most affecting part of the whole case. COLBECK, it is said, on hearing that it was not his Slave who had been murdered, WENT AWAY SATISFIED. O most opprobrious satisfaction! The preceeding part of the narrative had prepared us to expect in COLBECK some approximation to European feeling. But what is the fact? On being coolly told that a negro had been killed and buried, told so by his neighbour, the murderer: is he shocked? Does he express any horror or indignation on the occasion? No! he goes away *satisfied*!! Let the reader give its due weight to this one circumstance, and he must be convinced that

a state of society must exist in the West Indies of which, as an inhabitant of this happy island, he can scarcely form any adequate conception. Suppose, instead of a negro slave, that it had been a horse which had been thus killed ; COLBECK, had his horse happened to be missing at the time, would have pursued exactly the same steps, and would have been affected in the same way as in the present instance. We may also learn, from this impressive circumstance, the value of West Indian testimony when given in favour of West Indian humanity. The moral perceptions and feelings which prevail in that quarter of the world, it will be perceived, are wholly different from those on this side of the Atlantic. It may be allowed that these men mean what they say, when they give each other the praise of humanity. But examine their standard. Who is this man of humanity ? It is one, who, hearing that a fellow-creature has been cruelly and wantonly murdered, *goes away satisfied*, because he himself has sustained no loss by the murder ! An exception may be admitted in favour of a few men of enlightened minds ; but the remark applies to *the people*, to the bulk of the community, whose prejudices are stated by Lord SEAFORTH to be so *horribly absurd*, as to resist all measures for remedying this dreadful state of things. But not to detain the reader any longer with reasonings on this subject, let us proceed to the third case communicated by Lord SEAFORTH, and which, if possible, is worse than either of the foregoing.

3. A man of the name of NOWELL, who lives in St. Andrew's parish, had been in the habit of behaving

brutally towards his wife, and one day went so far as to lock her up in a room, and confine her in chains. A negro woman belonging to this man, *touched with compassion for her unfortunate mistress*, undertook privately to release her. NOWELL found it out, and in order to punish her, obliged her to put her tongue through a hole in a board, to which he fastened it on the opposite side with a fork, and left her in that situation some time. He afterwards cut out her tongue nearly by the root, in consequence of which she almost instantly died. No punishment followed this monstrous act of barbarity.

It will, doubtless, be argued, that individual instances of cruelty like those which have been cited are no proofs of *general* inhumanity, any more than the annals of the Old Bailey can be considered as exhibiting a fair view of our national character. There is, however, this very remarkable difference in the two cases—a difference which is fatal to the argument. In this country, when we read of crimes, we read of their being followed by just retribution—by severe and exemplary punishment. In the West Indies, on the contrary, we not only hear of the greatest crimes escaping with impunity, but we find the laws themselves conspiring to shelter criminals from justice ; we find the most respectable and enlightened part of the community sanctioning the perpetration even of murder, by their refusal to recognise the commission of it as a felonious act.

APPENDIX II

THE wholesale murder perpetrated on board the 'Zong' is dealt with thus in '*Substance of the Debates,*' etc. :—

The circumstance here alluded to was certainly never stated, as Mr. ROSE supposed, in any evidence either before the Privy Council or either House of Parliament. It came out on the trial of a case of insurance before Lord Chief-Justice MANSFIELD, and Justices WILLS and BULLER, in the Court of King's Bench, at Guildhall, in the month of March, 1783. The particulars, as carefully noted at the time of the trial, were as follows, viz. :—

The ship *Zong*, Luke *Collingwood*, master, sailed from the Isle of *St. Thomas*, on the Coast of *Africa*, the 6th September, 1781, with 442 slaves and 17 whites on board, for *Jamaica*; and on the 27th November following, she fell in with that island; but instead of proceeding to some port, the master, either through ignorance or a sinister intention, ran the ship leeward, alleging that he mistook *Jamaica* for *Hispaniola*.

Sickness and mortality had by this time taken place. It is needless to state that previously to the act regulating the transport of slaves, these evils scarcely

ever failed to carry off vast numbers during the voyage ; the avarice of the traders inducing them to crowd, or rather to *pack*, too many slaves together in the holds of their ships. On board the *Zong*, between the time of her leaving the Coast of Africa (6th September) and the 29th November, 1781, upwards of SIXTY slaves and SEVEN white people died, and a GREAT MANY of the remaining slaves, on the day last mentioned, were sick of some severe disorder, and LIKELY NOT TO LIVE LONG.

These circumstances of *sickness* and *mortality* are necessary to be remarked ; and also the consequence of them, viz. that the *dead* and *dying* slaves would have been a loss to the owners, and in some proportion also to the captain of the ship, who was allowed a certain percentage on the proceeds ; unless some pretence or expedient had been found to throw the loss upon the insurers.

The *sickness* and *mortality* on board the *Zong*, previous to the 29th November, 1781 (the time when they began to throw the poor negroes overboard alive), was NOT occasioned by the *want of water* ; for it was proved that the people on board did not discover till that very day, the 29th November, that the stock of fresh water was reduced, as was alleged, to 200 gallons. Yet the same day, or on the evening of it, *before any soul had been put to short allowance*, and before there was any present or real want of water, the master of the ship called together the officers, and told them to the following effect, "that if the slaves died a natural death, it would be the loss of the owners of the ship ;

but if they were *thrown alive into the sea, it would be the loss of the underwriters,*" and to palliate this inhuman proposal, the master, *Collingwood*, argued that it would not be so cruel to *throw the poor sick wretches* (meaning the slaves) *into the sea* as to suffer them to linger out a few days, under the disorders with which they were afflicted. To this scheme the mate (whose name was *Kelsall*) objected at the first, and said, '*there was no present want of water* to justify such a measure.' But *Collingwood* prevailed upon the rest of the officers and crew to listen to his proposal, and on the same evening, and during two or three following days, he caused to be picked out from the ship's cargo 133 slaves, all or most of whom were sick, and thought not likely to live, and ORDERED THE CREW BY TURNS TO THROW THEM INTO THE SEA, which order was readily complied with. It appeared by the evidence of Mr. *Stubbs*, late Governor of Anamaboe, then a passenger, and of the chief mate, *Kelsall*, that on the 29th November 54 persons were actually thrown overboard *alive*, and that on the following day 42 more were also thrown overboard.

On the second day after this barbarous murder had been committed, viz. on the 1st of December, and *before the stock of water was consumed*, there fell a plentiful rain, which was admitted to have '*continued a day or two*,' and which enabled them to collect *six casks of water*, which was FULL ALLOWANCE for 11 days, or for 23 days at half allowance; whereas the ship actually arrived at Jamaica in 21 days afterwards, viz. on the 22nd December, 1781. They seem also to

have had an opportunity of sending their boat for water, no less than 13 days sooner, viz. on the 9th December, when they '*made the west end of Jamaica distant two or three leagues only,*' as was stated by a person who was on board ; so that the six casks of rain water caught on the 1st and 2nd of December (only seven days before this opportunity of obtaining water from *Jamaica*) was not only a *providential* supply, but may perhaps be viewed as *providentially* demonstrating the iniquity of pretending a *necessity* to put innocent men to death through the *mere apprehension of a want*, which, even supposing it had taken place, could not have afforded an admissible justification of the horrible deed ; but which did *never really exist or take place at all* in their case ; their stock of water having never been actually consumed.

But this is not all. Notwithstanding this supply, and the proof which it afforded of the possibility of obtaining *further supplies by rain* ; and although they had the additional hope of being able to hold out with their increased stock of water, till they might chance to meet with some ship, or be able to send to some island for a further supply ; they nevertheless *cast 26 more human persons alive into the sea* EVEN AFTER THE RAIN, whose hands were also fettered. And this act was done, it seems, in the sight of many of the unhappy slaves, who were upon deck at the time. And such an effect had the sight on them, that apprehending a similar fate, and dreading, it would seem, the being fettered, ten more of them in despair jumped overboard, and were *likewise drowned* !

All these facts, it is never to be forgotten, came out, not upon the trial of *Collingwood* for murder, but upon a civil suit instituted by the owners, for the purpose of recovering from the underwriters the value of the slaves thus cruelly murdered. And, still more strange to relate, the owners gained their cause, while the agents in this horrible transaction were not even questioned criminally upon it.

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